THE SIAMESE CAT

LEON UNDERWOOD

INTRODUCTION BY PHILLIPS RUSSELL

LEON UNDERWOOD

Born a cockney in 1890. Enjoyed the unimpeded felicity of youth until 1909. Studied art in various London schools and first went abroad to assist in the decoration of the Peace Palace at the Hague. Returned from Russia, where he was living at the outbreak of war, to join the Horse Guards Blue (The Blues) of the British Expeditionary Forces. Served for three years in France in the Camouflage Section. Studied at the Slade School and went to Iceland as the holder of a premium in the Prix de Rome. Since the war has had a private school for drawing in London, traveled in Dalmatia, and visited the prehistoric caves of France and Spain. Illustrated "The Music From Behind the Moon," and published his first work in the same year. Illustrated the life of "John Paul Jones," by Phillips Russell, Brentano's, 1927. He has been a constant exhibitor of paintings at the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.

OBJECT ARE SYNONYMOUS TO MOST CATS

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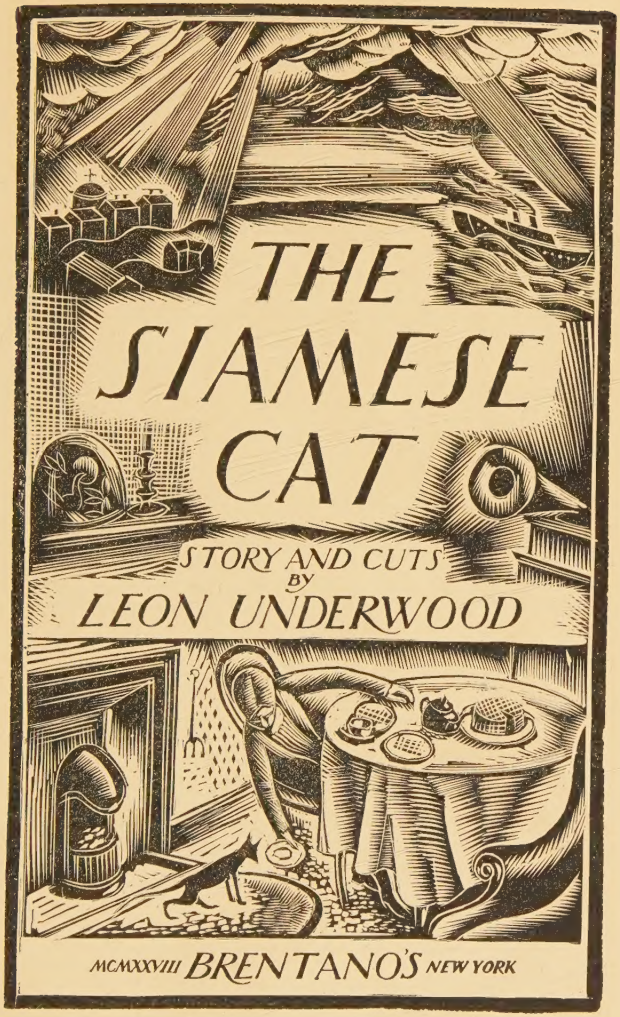
THE SIAMESE CAT


THE
SIAMESE
CAT
STORY AND CUTS
BY
LEON UNDERWOOD
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" Cela est bien dit, répondit Candide, mais il faut cultiver notre jardin."

TO MARY

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INTRODUCTION

BY PHILLIPS RUSSELL

Almost universally we have agreed to regard cats as mysterious. They say so little; the subtle movements and alternating contraction and expansion of their irises, their tails, imply so much. It is doubtful, however, if cats possess a secret. They are symbols of nothing but themselves. They have no meaning except as cats. They live only to express catness.

If there is one attribute more than any other which elicits our admiration, it is the completeness of cats. Their integrity is round and whole. They ask human beings only for food; but if refused, they are content under natural conditions, to get it for themselves. Otherwise they crave only to be let alone.

The dog, which under human vagaries is so often brought into association with cats, frequently apologizes, through his demeanor, for being a dog. But the cat is wholly satisfied to be a cat. One can take him or one can leave him. He remains unalterably cat.

This spirit of complete detachment as regards human affairs is best exhibited, Mr. Underwood maintains, by the Siamese variety of cat. It seems to be true that there is an element in the atmosphere, climate, or perhaps the constitution of Siam which raises to a high degree the faculty of instinct. The Siamese cat has little respect for facts as facts. Facts are so mundane and tumultuous that the Siamese cat turns from them in disdain, with a gesture signifying repulsion; his plea is that otherwise they would interfere with his apprehension of reality.

This is not to say that the Siamese cat is serious minded. On the contrary, one has only to watch him to catch his occasional dry, sidelong glance;

and observation of him at play reveals his gleams of puckish if quiet mirth. Nor, if he is sometimes jocund, is he lacking in intensity. To his pursuits he gives himself wholly, whether they be sports, the chase, or amour. Careless of public opinion, he goes his own way in these as in all other activities.

It is not to be understood, however, that the specimen whose adventures are herein described is necessarily typical. The writer informs me that his hero is special and highly individual. What this kitten beheld was not the world as we see it, but a world sometimes reversed and even upside down, and at all times catlike and Siamese.

It is perhaps because the narrator is not habitually a writer but a painter, sculptor, and engraver, that the Siamese cat whose story now begins, receives such sympathetic treatment.

THE SIAMESE CAT

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAUGH PARTY

I deduce that Siam, where our hero comes from, is different from anywhere else — for the creation of postage stamps is one of its important industries, as anyone who has collected them knows. But with respect to the ambition of every true Siamese father to see his son occupy a responsible position in the Royal Mint, the Siamese are similar to the English — whose paternal goal is the business side of a counter and to the Americans — whose aim for their progeny is the commercial end of a motor car.

It is inevitable that our hero, at the time the story commences, was an exported Siamese kitten:

he could not have been exported, with any national status, before he became a kitten, and, had he remained at home, would have been no more than a kitten in Siam. The beginning of his career was determined for him as it is for most of us; the rest of it, except the end, he is known to have had some hand in.

At a tender age, and in the company of many of his kind, he was exported from a native land where exportation is flavoured with social dignity.

When the freightage steamer departed with its cargo of postage stamps, Siamese twins, and cats, it was a beautiful day in August. She steamed out of what in Norway would be called a fjord. The receding and very lovely mainland resembled a view in a better Japanese print, improved by the modest lack of signature in foreground or sky.

The ship's steward, a little butter-scotch coloured fat man in a cream-coloured uniform, looked like an ivory carving. In spite of his artistic appearance he was a truly kind and affectionate man; yet, he was a trifle sentimental. Seeing a dock porter, when the ship was lading, about to put an armful of kittens into the hopper-feed of the suction elevator, he took one from the top of the pile; because he saw something in its face that reminded him of his wife. Thus, the kitten was singled out by the steward who took to him from then onwards.

In odd moments he gave heed to the kitten's care, leaving him at the foot of a ventilator when he had to attend elsewhere.

Siamese usually feel deeply different from others. But the kitten, although born a Siamee, was just then too dazed to feel emotionally the gravity of the situation; he lay at the foot of the ventilator on the aft deck, insensibly photographing his diminishing homeland as the powerful twin screws drew the vessel swiftly off.

The steward appeared waddling towards him, whistling in his native tongue:

"Ha, ha, he, he,
Cheese for thee
Is chalk for me —
I was born a Siamee! "

He stopped to see if the kitten were there, and on seeing him gazed out astern.

Gaining speed, the ship gave the foreground a great deal of trouble to keep up with her; the big waves, in their effort to do so, became more and more convulsive and swollen as if they would burst. Unable to bear witness to the hopeless struggles of the swollen foreground, the sentimental steward brought out of his pocket a small silk handkerchief emblazoned with the Siamese flag and wept voluminously into it.

The sound of Siamese sobbing fell upon the kitten's ears, and his dormant ancestral memory awakened to identify himself with the sobber as true Siamese. The steward looked at the kitten's upturned face, and as he remarked its friendliness gratitude increased his distress. Large tears formed in his eyes, making the kitten appear more like his wife than ever. The tears acted as uncentred lenses to distort his vision, which gave lease to outbursts of distress more touching than the first. The kitten was gravely affected and wore a con-

gested look as he watched the great tears run down the face of the steward.

As she entered the ocean the roll of the ship increased, causing the flood of tears to pour alternately from the steward's port and starboard eyes; the lap of the waves alternated in sympathy on the ship's sternplates, seeming to invite and soothe the flow of tears.

Smoke from the stack, swayed by the ship, drew a wavy line down the sky. The miserable steward's attention was drawn to it by the call of a gull, and looking up he saw it stretching away astern, a wavy and motionless line. But as he gazed the roll of the ship caused it to criss-cross his vision, in rhythm with the unstemmed flood of tears. And when the gull commenced a crazy flight on the same pattern, he was aware of a swelling inside like that of the foreground; so that, in some strange way, he felt compelled to give in to his orchestrating sensations or burst as the swollen waves threatened to do. He swayed his body to and fro, closing his eyes as he did so. By this means he hoped for the better control of his remaining senses. But the suppression of one of them intensified the receptivity of the rest, and his hope was vain.

In situations of the kind, Siamese — not unlike us — are to be relied upon. The intensive feelings

expressed by the steward demanded respect of those on duty. They went about their business in as unconcerned a manner as possible, feeling it behoved them *most* to behave like Siamese when leaving their country.

Two sailors on duty were busy coiling up a hawser nearby, when three more off duty came up the hatchway rubbing their eyes and peering about them to see — as is customary — which way the ship was going. Each greeted the spectacle of the sobbing steward with a smile which increased as he looked at his two companions; it was impossible for one to see two at a glance, and as he gazed from one to the other his amusement became contagious — for Siamese do not easily consent to be outdone at amiability. The three were soon wearing broad grins that speedily broke into hearty laughter.

The ship, smoke, waves, and gull, rolling, waving, lapping and criss-crossing, had an effect upon the sailors — though not the same as that upon the swaying steward — and gradually disciplined their bodies into obedient harmony with the swaying of his. Joining hands they swung from side to side and cried out: " S-EE-M S-EE-M S-EE-M! " which was the name of the ship, and interpreted means HARMONY plus DISCIPLINE.

The two sailors on duty, unable to withstand any longer the effect the spirits of the revellers had

upon them, threw down their tools and joined in the *laugh-party*. And down from the bridge, with a box of chocolates under his arm, came the Captain, whose name was SEE-M — which means FUN; he beamed on every one present, because what he saw confirmed one of his favourite convictions. His convictions were confirmed whenever the occasion seemed suitable, for, as he said, "At a confirmation service, people who are too polite to break the engagement do not always feel in the mood for it."

The sailors on duty saluted the Captain and he saluted those off duty, as he handed around chocolates filled with various liqueurs. Everyone took one of each kind to make sure of getting his favourite. Meanwhile, the steward continued to sway and dance with his eyes closed, unaware of what was happening about him. The kitten, with his chin on his paws, looked on with bewildered interest.

Captain See-m joined them in a circle about the crying steward. The pace of the dance led by the steward increased so that the decks responded until they dipped at either side with every other lurch. A dip to port shipped on board a great deal of seawater, which drained off, leaving half a dozen mermaids against the handrail. Laughter was at its height when this occurred, and each man — too

sincere to interrupt the merriment with a formal introduction — seized a mermaid for his partner. On went the dance.

Unable to make proper steps, the mermaids took very graceful slides, and considerately Captain See-m ordered the decks to be buttered.

When a great lurch swept them all off their feet, the steward opened his tearful eyes to take in the situation with a glance sufficient to guide him, with nice judgment, in what he should do next. He sat there, victim of circumstances he had not seen — an individual among his fellows! Fortunately for him it was a laugh-party where good humour prevailed, had it been on parade he could not have coped with the situation by laughing with the rest as he did. He did not remark the kitten beside him. Much affected by his master's change of emotion the animal began to purr.

They all remained seated, shaking with mirth, and told funny stories until the steward calmed a little and brought up refreshments. Ham sandwiches and bottles of ginger-beer were laid out to the amused concern of the mermaids, who said: " Where we live, we keep solids in bottles — but we enjoy having things served in new ways; " and proceeded to make their hosts feel that they did.

When the party was thoroughly refreshed, the three sailors off duty called for a song, saying,

" Skipper, give us a song! " The Captain replied with formality, granting their request. Siamese captains are always on duty and have to behave like that; yet it was not a bad song the way he sang it:

My good ship *Seem* and me
Are wedded to the sea,
So we live happily.

Seem, sy-eem, se-me,
My heart is on the sea.

To compliment the ladies, who clapped, he popped in an impromptu verse:

O sea maids we feel
Your sex appeal,
As, back to the wheel,
We show the land a heel.

More verses of the proper version followed:

Ozone it is said
Turns a sailor's head,
And his nose red.

Seem, sy-eem, se-me,
My heart is on the sea.

Ashore he can't abide —
Waiting the tide
Back to his bride.

Seem, sy-eem, se-me,
My heart is on the sea.

During the concert the ship crossed the bar and moved upon the open swell where the waves were much quieter.

The sailors on duty sang next, in chorus. It was a sentimental song about the hardship of the sailor's life on a stormy sea away from his lass. But ended happily in his coming to port in her arms. And one of the mermaids did a slip dance with wonderful dexterity, which was considered by all the best turn of the afternoon. Showing her delight at their unstinted praise she blushed prettily.

At the foot of the ventilator where the steward had left him, the kitten watched the proceedings, letting nothing elude his observation. Cut above and below by the oblique slant of the lids, the greenish coloured pupils of his eyes gave him the air of a natural philosopher, infinitely wise without having learned much.

The kitten walked into the centre of the company with an easy yet commanding grace. A pause and pirouette made as though kitty were about to take his turn at the entertainment, produced applause in anticipated appreciation of a performance, until his antics suddenly changed and mild confusion took their place. His hair stood up on his back and he gave a low hiss. The thought of a stowaway dog on board took the steward by alarm and he looked anxiously round for the disturber, but finding none he walked over to the kitten with one hand extended — coaxing him with his lips. Kitty, raising his back higher and hissing loudly, retired from his approach. The steward — always equal to a situation, like a parent who disowns a disobedient child — ignored the kitten's presence, and stooping picked up a ribbon discarded from the Captain's box of chocolates.

Poising cleverly on her tail, a sea-maid slipped forward and scanned the sky in all directions. Leaning down she took up the kitten in her arms; and he readily permitted her to do so, as if giving up the platform to his fair interpreter.

" Captain," she said, in a sweet but troubled voice, " Kitty's instinct is more accurate than the ship's instruments. There is a storm brewing not far off in the N. W." Then, turning to her companions, " It is time we made haste to our homes — we

must leave before it breaks." As a signal she gave three flaps on the deck with her tail, and they made ready to take leave.

Now that they had to go home and were sure they wanted to know the jolly crew, it was quite time for formal introductions. Each maid tore off a piece of her hair of seaweed, and, making an impression of her lips upon it, exchanged it with her partner for his identity disc. Dropping over the side into the water, they waved farewell to the crew as they sank out of sight.

Last to take leave was the chaperone who had explained the kitten's behaviour by the prediction of a storm. On bidding farewell to Captain See-m, she made a little speech in which she said she had

no idea that sailors were such nice fellows, or she would certainly have encouraged them before. Inquiring of him the course of their return voyage, she too dropped over the side and disappeared.

Returning to the wheelhouse Captain See-m consulted the barometer to find it falling rapidly. Sweeping the horizon with his binoculars, he saw the fringe of a menacing cloud in the N. W. corner. Picking up the telephone, he ordered the radio operator to seek information regarding weather conditions in that vicinity. His appeal was shortly answered: the S. S. *Toad-in-the-hole,* sixty miles to the north-west, reported a storm sweeping south-east. From the rest of the report it was clear to Captain See-m that he could not hope to dodge the storm by altering the course of his ship. Sitting down to consider, he reflected on the kitten's behaviour and the chaperone's words about instinct.

The storm advanced towards the S. S. *Seem.* Treading with heavy feet, the fury of the storm churned great holes which disturbed the sea's tranquil surface and made it angry and agitated. In a loud uneven voice the storm sang as it swept:

I am the Storm.
My heart is torn.
I come on all fours
And I will tear yours.

Look out!

Wind in my brain
To blow you down.
Rain in my train
To wet and drown.

Look out!

The voice, cracking, separated into a number of smaller voices:

THE WIND

As an arrow
I cleave and furrow
Through the wave
However brave.

THE RAIN

Sleet and I
Pass none by.
Tears from a
Storm God's eye,
Ever falling,
Self avenging,
From the sky.

THE WAVES

joining in

We are the braves —
His willing slaves —
To whom he raves.

THE SPRAY

in a high voice

I'm a trifle gay; pray,
Stern brothers, make way!

THE THUNDER

with a crash

Children, hold . . . !
I am with you.

THE LIGHTNING

joining in

Your plot dark —
Hatched in the night —
With my little spark
I will make light.

ALL TOGETHER

So now we're freed
And all agreed
To re-assemble —
Make the foe tremble!

Captain See-m rose from his chair, and taking off his low peaked cap put on one of a taller crown and went out to give orders for preparations to be made for the storm. On his way round he saw the steward and asked him to go later to his cabin. He wished to see the steward because he could not

banish the thought of the kitten's behaviour from his mind, and felt uneasy about it.

Making a tour of his ship he told everyone to do his job. A formula which, on such occasions, they all understood to mean that the old man was none too sure of *himself*. They did not say much, for it was unnecessary; partly because they all felt the same about it themselves, but chiefly because it was no one's business to be too concise about anything before pay-day. It was sufficient for them to salute his last words, which were: " Every man is on duty! "

In his cabin he found the steward waiting for him. " Steward," he said, " where is that kitten? " " At the foot of the ventilator, sir," the steward replied. The Captain paused thoughtfully, and went on: " You may consider yourself off duty, Saam," calling the steward by his first name which means Service. " Do you mind telling me why you took to *that* kitten? "

The steward fidgeted shyly. " Well? " queried the Captain again, encouragingly. The steward replied with hesitation, " I saw him in the arms of another man, and he reminded me of my wife before we were married." To which the Captain returned, " That is sentiment on your part, Saam, and as such throws no light upon the kitten's instinct — which is *more true than the ship's instruments.*" He

paused thoughtfully, then continued as though repeating his thoughts, " Unless the instinct of this kitten goes much further. . . ."

The steward stood at attention: " Respectfully interrupting you, sir — I would like to be put on duty again, sir — if it's all the same to you, sir." " Why certainly, steward," replied the Captain; " but I would like to have a few more words with you." " As many as you wish, sir," said the steward.

The Captain continued, " Now steward, what did you see in that animal apart from the resemblance . . . ? " The steward scouted with the preliminary before answering: " Am I on duty, sir? " " Yes steward, at your own request," replied the Captain. " Then sir, I thought he might eat up the scraps in the officers' galley. Cook complains that it is overrun with mice."

This caused the Captain quite a long pause, at the end of which he said in an altered tone, " Steward, tell the cabin boy to make up a bed for the kitten in here — it is getting overrun with rats."

The steward entered the saloon to carry out the Captain's orders; and at the same time the kitten, licking his jaws, sauntered out of the galley with an indifferent air and walked across the floor. The steward drew from his pocket the piece of ribbon discarded from the Captain's box of choco-

lates, which he had picked up on deck. Taking a ring from his finger he threaded it and tied the ribbon about the kitten's neck.

At the mermaids' departure, the crew returned to their quarters and went about their business. What the chaperone said about the kitten's behaviour was unnoticed by them. Had they remarked it they would have passed it as ' feminine stuff ' calculated to impress the skipper, for there was no doubt in the minds of the crew that the chaperone had made a great hit with the old man.

Finding himself alone the kitten turned over the events he had witnessed since leaving port, to think about them in his own way. A Siamese kitten's way of thinking is not the same as the human way — though it serves the same purpose it is done differently.

It was difficult for him to identify human emotions with his own, or even to recognise some of them. Moreover he was not accustomed to humans, neither did he fully understand their speech. Although there were serious difficulties to any satisfactory conclusion, so far as he could see humans were not very different from cats — but for

the fact that they appeared less concerned about important things. Two things were evident to him — that human grief and happiness are very close together, and that human feelings are not so personal as cats'.

" Even the best type of human I know," he said to himself, referring in his mind to the steward and his exhibition, " acts like those woolly animals I used to watch eating grass in the pasture at the back of the old barn."

When he was very young, on the Siamese cat farm where he had been reared, the farmer put him in a blanket with several other kittens and left them in the window of the barn, saying they had a touch of distemper and the sun would do them good. The kitten watched some sheep grazing in the meadow below, and for several days he watched until he knew each of them. When the shepherd came with his dog to take them in, they behaved always in the same way. He had a sympathy for them in the great dislike they showed for the dog.

The dog, who was a blustering bully, barked, and they ran away without any apparent direction, and bumped into one another. Each one did as the others did until, seemingly, some accident detached one of them. Whereupon the whole flock headed off towards him until another accident started them off in a different direction altogether.

He did not consider sheep aggressive animals. They could after all behave as they liked, without even justifying his comment. It was the strange similarity he saw in their ways and those of the ship's crew in the afternoon that called for comparison. Apart from this, the sheep method had struck him so favourably that he had made the experiment of trying to become one, which had been unsuccessful because he lacked the support of his fellow kittens on the farm. Now, an entirely new light was thrown upon it for him; the ship's crew were aggressive animals that mutually supported one another like those docile woolly ones.

The first audible low roll of thunder roused the kitten fom his meditations. He was a graceful creature whose coat had about it a little of the fluffiness of youth. But on hearing the warning he instantly took on a startled look and his back became arched, separating each hair. Swinging quickly round he faced the direction whence the warning came. Hesitating and with some defiance he began to walk backwards. Against the skirting of the deckhouse he stayed and, with accumulating courage, slowly lowered his back. He remained in that position alert and observing.

Came sounds from all sides as it was rapidly growing dusk, and parties of the crew, in twos and threes, scuttled along the decks dragging hatch covers, coils of rope, and mauls and wedges, to lash securely the ship's boats and hatches. The kitten, with an eye on the north-west corner of the horizon, paid no attention to their approach. A gang of three sailors off duty, who in the afternoon had joined the laugh-party, flung down their loads and began to secure the boom and jib in front of him.

He watched them at work and noticed that the rhythm of their movements had entirely altered from that at the laugh-party. Their voices had changed too he discovered, listening to the talk that went on continuously. In the tone and inflection of this he saw some relation to their rapid and jerky movements. Were they normal or did something possess them he wondered? And it

occurred to him that perhaps the unseen cause of his alarm in the north-west was responsible for the change in them — that their behaviour and his alarm were both to be identified with FEAR. He continued to watch them with the engrossed interest of a student who, forgetting his own feelings, learns while unconscious of study.

Turning round for a rope, one of the gang noticed the kitten and picking him up said, " Hey, no place for you here." The sailor who did this hoped to ingratiate himself with the steward and draw an advance ration of tobacco. Seizing the opportunity to serve his purpose, he pushed open a door to the officers' galley, thrust the kitten in, and closed it again.

The kitten was not a little annoyed at the forced interruption in his observations; yet, not forgetting himself as a cat, he behaved with becoming composure. At the same time he mused to himself, " A real sheep would not have acted in that way. I was certainly right in considering Man its flatterer and a most aggressive animal."

In the galley an animated conversation was going on between the cook and his assistants, who were preparing the evening meal. In their voices and movements the kitten recognised the same significant note of suppressed alarm as in the movements and voices of the sailors on deck. A defiant

air of indifference — which was in places a little thin — concealed their anxiety and compelled him to admire them.

Singing seemed to offer them some release for their pent-up feelings. As the First Assistant carried a tall pile of dishes to the oven he burst forth:

> A sailor's life for me
> In a good ship on the sea.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Storms that knock the plates about
> Always find the best men out!

"Not so much pepper in the old man's soup tonight," cried the Second to the Third in a tone of voice that emphasised the meaning of the song.

The third shook the canister over the tureen so vigorously that a spray of cayenne pepper invaded the galley. The Second exclaimed to the Third, as he pointed to the kitten, "See what you've shaken out that way" — and then to the kitten, "Come to see us, Me-see Mes?" Seeing an opportunity to refer obliquely to a subject that was tabooed in the galley, he added; "Don't you like the look of it outside, dearie?"

The third prepared a dish of unborn white mice in honey, which the Siamese consider a great delicacy. Having a few left over in the tin, he tipped them out on a plate and placed it on the floor in

the corner of the galley, saying as he did so; " There is your supper, *Mrs. Saam.*"

It is surprising how things got about on board the S. S. *S-ee-m.*

The kitten, who was thenceforth known as the steward's wife, decided the chance of another course for supper was not worth the risk of being stepped on. And so at the first opportunity, when the inside door of the galley was thrust open and a head appeared to repeat the order ' Close the ports,' he slipped out between its owner's legs. Licking his moustaches he strolled into the saloon where, as we have seen, the steward picked him up.

A knock at the Captain's door announced the cabin-boy's arrival, and he entered with the kitten in his arms. " Thank you, Siims," said the Captain as the boy put down, on a small chart table, a box he had made ready as a bed for the kitten, " You may go." When the boy had gone the Captain looked out of the port to the north-west, and turning to the kitten addressed him gravely: " What are we to do about it, puss? " The kitten, who had jumped on the couch and stretched himself out, gave his jaws a last savoury lick with his tongue and contracted the pupils of his eyes. Reaching out his forearms in parallel he put his head down upon them, and looking up dreamily seemed to enquire in imitation of the Captain: " What are *you* going

to do about it? " Then, shaking his head with a quick movement that vibrated his ears and sniffing at the same time, he closed his eyes to sleep.

He did not sleep for some time, but lay and tried to take up his thoughts at the point where they had been interrupted by the seaman who put him into the galley. " Sheep," he resumed, " seem ridiculous because of their resemblance to men and vice versa, whereas, either taken separately are harmless enough." This conciliatory twist in conclusion, to what for him had been a perplexing problem, was no doubt due in some measure to rich food.

The meaning of the Captain's words he understood well enough, for he was making great headway in the identification of certain signs. But his nature told him to be discreet. The interdependence of man, he thought, was the reason he blabbed so and no doubt accounted for the Captain's admission of weakness a few moments before — when he asked for the kitten's confidence.

A cat was sure of itself as an individual and had no need to take or to give advice as both were humiliating. He considered: By giving advice he might gain a name but would lose his right of superiority in the Captain's estimation, by taking it he would lose both through the loss of self-esteem.

His thoughts became confused. He was con-

scious of a strangely unpleasant odour which caused him to rise and discover he had been lying on a sheepskin at the head of the couch. The Captain saw him get up and said, " Got something to say about it now, puss? " But the kitten merely walked to the end covered in cotton and curling himself up, was soon lost in real sleep.

CHAPTER TWO

VISIONS

The kitten dreamed: He was a bottle on a shelf in the corner of a small deckhouse. In the bottle's neck, giving light from above his head, a candle was the sole illumination of the interior. Unlike the sumptuously fitted cabins of the S. S. *Seem* the place was small, grimy, and in a violent state of motion. Had not the kitten-bottle been wedged

between some objects on the shelf it would have been thrown to the floor at every toss.

The wind howled without, and while the windows bathed in successive flushes of white foam, a dark shiny stream of water trailed and retrailed across the floor. The actions of the cabin's occupants were as desperate as the appearance of its interior was ominous and gloomy. The one in a peaked cap remained at the wheel without once turning round, while the other, a boy, came and went irregularly. Whenever the door opened a blast would seize the kitten-bottle and he would feel his last moment had come. The candle would be blown out and relighted with difficulty for the cabin filled with moisture.

" Cargo's shifting," the boy shouted to make himself heard above the din. At the boy's words a dimly visible tremor went through the man at the wheel. " Tell the first . . . hands off . . . . and fix it! " was shouted back. The boy's face was hopeless when he came into the cabin to make this announcement. But as the man at the wheel looked at him and answered him thus his aspect of despair changed for one of courage, through a muscular effort that seemed painful and difficult for him to maintain. Each time the boy came events took the same course. And each time the boy was in a hurry to leave.

After the lad's visits the man at the wheel would be steadier, only to become abandoned and helpless again. He would become hysterical, weeping as a child, and at times lose the wheel altogether. He always changed on hearing the boy's footsteps on the deck outside, became rigid, and shouted clear and firm words so different from those he hysterically mumbled to himself when alone. The kitten-bottle became anxious for fear the thin veneer of either's pretence to the other would break.

Their behaviour was grotesque: the man at the wheel continued to borrow his courage from the boy, who in turn reborrowed it from the man at the wheel, and imitation went on until their resources were ever more threadbare and the boy's visits became more frequent.

The motion of the room had in the meantime been getting less, and the flushes of white foam on the window ceased.

The man at the wheel showed great physical exhaustion. He could not have perceived that the storm outside was relenting, for he continued to treat the situation with the same despair.

Approaching footsteps were heard on the outside decking once again. Before the door was opened the man at the wheel straightened himself up and the monstrous fantasy was at last broken by a variation in the intercourse. This time the

boy, speaking in a normal voice, stated that the pumps were making headway. On hearing it, the man at the wheel gave way to his hysterical turn for the first time in the presence of the boy. Repressing a momentary loss of control and looking towards the bottle in the corner, the boy said on a sudden; "The candle burnt well, sir — I don't know what you'd have done without it!"

Whereupon the man at the wheel turned round, and the kitten-bottle saw he was Captain See-m.

On waking the following morning, the kitten was surprised to find himself in the Captain's cabin of the S. S. *S-ee-m,* on the cotton end of the couch, alone. Looking down at his paws he was still further surprised to see that he was not a bottle. He must have had a vision. He did not know what a vision was, but whatever it was it was unusual.

Finding the light too bright for his eyes he contracted the pupils to small dots, and turning his head to one side gazed sleepily round the cabin with a look of mild wonder.

A ship's clock was ticking on the wall above his head, and the cabin was swinging gently. The playful movement of a patch of sunlight dancing in the centre of the floor pleased him. Some tassels

swinging from above and the ticking of the clock on the wall seemed to be in harmony. Listening, he could hear the slapping of the water outside; it was all very pleasing.

The Captain's bunk was empty and had not been slept in. On a side wall hung a barometer with two amusing figures standing in the two front doorways of a little cottage — the guardian of fair weather was boldly out on her doorstep. Gulls flapped by outside the windows. The kitten closed his eyes and shortly afterwards heard:

THE CLOCK

Tic, toc, I keep the time.

THE COMPASS

Ha, ha, the ship's on the line.

A GULL

Cree, cree, it's all due to me!

CHORUS

We pull together
Through to fair weather.

THE WAVES

Slap, slap, we have brought you back.

Let me sleep now it's light,
For I stood by all night. . . .

Opening his eyes, he expected to see a group of excited contestants. But for the Captain, who now lay snoring in his bunk, the cabin was empty as before. He concluded that he had fallen asleep again and had had another vision.

The first vision convinced him that the Captain's ability to cope with and overcome the north-west

terror was negligible. The second one told him who his real protectors were; the clock, the compass, the gulls, the waves and the lifebelt. He decided he would make better acquaintance with them.

The sunlight had passed the centre of the floor, some wet clothes hung on a peg on the door, and there was a smell of coffee and scorched bread on the air. The kitten knew that the Captain would soon rise, for the smell of coffee and getting up always went together on the farm where he had been reared. Another association with the smell of coffee and getting up was his own breakfast, which he felt uncomfortably in need of.

He looked enviously at the gulls as they flapped by outside, but the window glass was an obstacle to him. He felt grateful to the gulls for their part in saving the ship the night before; but now that their job was done in that respect, he would like to eat one of them — for there were plenty more and he had *his* job to consider.

The Captain awoke. Seeing the kitten he leaned out of his bunk rubbing together his forefinger and thumb. The kitten, expecting his breakfast, responded to the Captain's attention by walking over to see what he held out, but found the outstretched hand empty. The Captain began to stroke his back, saying: " Well, we are still alive, puss. . . . You understood. . . . Yes, I knew it

would be all right when you slept through it all — that gave me confidence. You gave the first warning too — your instinct is more . . . "

The door opened and the steward entered carrying a dish of hot muffins. " Ha," the Captain said, " Here is our breakfast, puss," and smiled at the kitten. " I will take him into the galley, sir, cook has some nice scraps for him," the steward ventured. But he was caught up by the Captain; " Then bring them here, for puss is to be my honoured guest this morning. The rats, I think, were roused a bit by the storm last night. . . . It was the kitten's instinct that helped us through, steward."

The steward, looking anxiously at the Captain, said, " I am sure, sir, every man did his job, but it was your skill alone that brought us through, and every man aboard knows it. . . . It is just like your modesty to give the credit to the cat, sir. The young animal is very handsome — especially in some lights," he added, thinking of his wife. " And he deserves to be well treated, for a beauty and a good mouser don't often go together. . . . I know cats — we've had thirty-two but never had the luck of that combination."

The steward departed. Captain See-m breakfasted in meditative mood, fed the kitten with small pieces of his buttered muffins, smeared a

little butter on his feet, and sat back to watch him lick it off.

Breakfast over he dressed, and taking the kitten under his arm strolled out towards the foredeck where a party of men was being paraded by the mate, and another making a general survey of the equipage to put it in order after the storm. Those

on parade responded to the Captain's salute with three loud cheers, and the mate began to speak on their behalf of their praise for the way the Captain had handled the ship. Captain See-m put down the kitten and raised his hand as a sign that he wished the demonstration to go no further.

He said, while he appreciated the esteem in which the crew held him as their Captain, he could make no claim to credit for the safety of the ship

during the storm. Credit for it was entirely due to the kitten. As he spoke the kitten rubbed against his legs in a familiar manner, and among the men on parade there passed around a whisper that the trials of the night before had quite played on the old man's mind.

The Captain called the ship's carpenter, whose name was Siim, and he came forward. He was a very pleasant little man with a red face, the features of which co-joined at striking angles as if they expressed his professional ability for putting things together. Sticking out of his apron, which was rolled up about his waist, were the ends of some carpenters' tools. The fingers of his short stubby hands had the appearance of having been rubbed or planed off at the tips, and one of his thumbs was bound up with wood shaving.

To the Captain's enquiry if he was a good hand at carving he answered modestly: a sailor's calling did not give him much opportunity but he did his best on the turkey whenever he was at home for Christmas. Captain See-m, seeing his mistake in not being more explicit, put the question clearly by asking if he had done any Artwork, and if he thought he could carve a cat as well as a turkey.

The Captain wished to pay some tribute to the kitten's unusual instinct, responsible for pulling

them through, and have a carving made of him for the figure-head of the S. S. *Seem*.

Siim then stated, that, as a carpenter's apprentice, he had attended a class in Artwork and was the proud owner of the prize offered by the council and gained by his design in a fretwork clock. He looked at the kitten and said he reminded him of the clock which now stood on his sister's mantel shelf — a fretwork portrait of her cat, into the face of which he had set a small alarm clock with a luminous dial.

"Good," said Captain See-m, "I can see you will turn out an artistic job that will do honour to the traditions of the S. S. *Seem*. You may begin without delay and will be excused from all ordinary

duties." Siim returned to his bench and taking off his apron — the sign of his trade — sat down and began to make plans with the air of one promoted in rank.

Mrs. Saam stole away from the scene on the foredeck, down through one of the hatches, and wandered about below. He paused by an open door of the engine room and went on down the gangway to the hold, where the cargo which had shifted during the storm was being re-stowed by the crew.

From overhead two rows of electric lamps shed their light upon activities. Bales that had become loosened and suffered from the tossing about in the storm were unpacked, and their contents taken out on trucks to the storeroom to be reconditioned. Each square compact bale held six Siamese twins, tied up together with as many kittens as were needed to fill in the spaces between them. While further economy and solidity were achieved by filling in with postage stamps the yet smaller spaces.

Like Mrs. Saam, the kittens were all young. They lay about as so many pieces of pasteboard and the twins had the same unnatural appearance. The atmosphere of the hold was extremely cold. And the sailors worked in heavy jerseys and woollen gloves as they unbound the damaged bales and

sorted their contents out into piles of cats, stamps, and twins.

Mrs. Saam crouched beside a pile of kittens. A sailor came along and loaded them into a truck. Owing to the pressure of kittens piled upon him, Mrs. Saam was unable to move where he lay at the bottom in great cold and discomfort. The truck was then wheeled into the storeroom. Its conductor closed the door and tipped its load in a heap upon the floor. Transferred by this process from the bottom to the top of the pile, Mrs. Saam picked himself up and scrambled away, as quickly as his shaken body would permit, to collect his scattered senses and look round.

Recognising a sister from the farm he went over to greet her. His old playfellow was quite glad to see him and they fell to talking in the cat tongue. "I am pleased to see you . . . had no idea you were on this boat," said Mrs. Saam. "I did not know that I was on a boat . . . and besides, I don't think I know just what you mean by *boat,*" she replied, hoping she would not appear ignorant.

Mrs. Saam tried to think of a suitable explanation of a boat, and saw with despair that *any* explanation would probably require an explanation of an ocean, a port, and perhaps a purpose. But without losing his head he said, "It's part of

domestication." To which his lady friend replied that she did not know she was on any part of domestication until a few moments ago when she was unfrozen.

Mrs. Saam felt considerably less superior when he in turn had to ask of his friend, " What is being frozen? " And his friend had much more confidence in her explanation of " being frozen " than Mrs. Saam had had in his of a " boat."

She gave a faithful account of her sensations and emotions. After being dropped into a large funnel on the wharf she fell a few cat's lengths into a powerful draft that seized her and hustled her along a narrow passage, uphill all the way, for a distance that seemed at least twice round the old barn on the farm. Then she was swept along for quite the same distance down hill, and when the wind ceased she fell upon a pile of kittens, and others continued to fall upon her. She could see nothing, but felt the ground beneath her move and jolt. When it stopped, the kittens about her were pressed in on her until she could not breathe freely. Those furthest from her made a complaint about the cold; a complaint which was taken up by those nearer, and finally she felt it herself. The cold became intense and paralysing, causing a sleepy feeling which overcame her and she recollected no more.

She added, at the end of her story, that as sleep

overcame her in the cold darkness she thought she heard the farm clock, or possibly another clock — ticking.

Mrs. Saam listened attentively to his friend, and when she concluded their attention was attracted to some excitement going on behind. Turning round they saw a small party of kittens telling their experiences. The party grouped itself about a small light coloured kitten who held forth in the centre.

Immediately he was recognised by the pair as a brother of their farm days. When they called out their greetings to him he peaked his ears in recognition. He was telling everyone the words of wisdom he had heard from the old cat of the green eyes and grey whiskers on the farm. An old cat of the world who had travelled a great deal and only the year before had returned to the Siamese farm from the occident. She had been specially selected to perpetuate the race. No one, he said, thought her goodlooking, but she spoke so authoritatively of outside affairs, they could not contradict her, no matter how unfavourably they were struck by her appearance.

He went on to say, she spoke of how in her youth she had gone abroad on a boat, and of how she had been frozen in order that she would not grow up on the voyage — so that the company should not have

to pay duty on her as a cat. On the homeward journey she had travelled in luxury and with due dignity. As a pet on board she had shared the chief engineer's cabin with him.

So sincere and unaffected was the little kitten who spoke, he was entirely unconscious of the distinguished dark marks on his ears and the limp in one of his paws that had not properly thawed out.

Taking down a basketful of new arrivals from the top of a hot air inlet a sailor put it down by Mrs. Saam and his friend. Slowly and sleepily, as they revived, they scrambled out of the basket.

Further into the room the Siamese twins were undergoing efficiency tests. They were set on the benches in front of the ship's schoolmaster who examined them by the questionnaire in *The Log,* the ship's newspaper. His clerk sat beside him to operate an adding machine. Those obtaining eighty per cent of the possible marks were given a beef injection and taken to the refrigerating chamber to be frozen again and repacked. Those falling below this level were treated by various methods of first aid or taken to the ship's hospital, according to their intelligence.

Beyond the Siamese twins, the floor was marked out with a long course for testing the kittens — somewhat after the fashion of that used in chil-

dren's hopscotch. The boards were divided up into a number of laps with horizontal lines. At the bottom was the widest called the start. In the next one was written one hundred per cent, and each succeeding one ninety per cent, eighty per cent, and so on. The course at the top was rounded off and valued five per cent.

Kittens, six at a time, were started up the course in pursuit of clockwork mice. Each kitten was awarded marks corresponding to those of the lap in which he overtook and captured his mouse. M. U. M. fifty. indicated the centre line (Mean utility measure, fifty per cent) and kittens failing to catch their mice on the near side of this line were taken to the cats' hospital.

If any doubt arose over a kitten who caught a mouse on the line it was settled in the most fair manner possible. The line, which was made of brass and countersunk into the floor, was taken by a sailor at either end and raised. The disputant was awarded the marks of the division into which he was tumbled by the rising rod.

Kittens awarded eighty per cent were passed A. I., the clockwork mice were taken from them and they were given a concentrated mouse tablet. Mice tablets, the ship's veterinary contended, were just as nutritious for them as mice although they were not made from mice and do not overtax the digestion as mice sometimes do.

Mrs. Saam caught his mouse on the hundred per cent mark and was thereupon seized by the sailor who pushed him into the galley before the storm, classified F. U. M. (Full utility marks), and carried off to the refrigerators. Seeing the steward's ring about his neck the sailor recognized him as Mrs. Saam, and his thwarted hopes returned with fresh confidence. Returning to the storeroom with him he dropped a few mouse cubes into his hat, set it by Mrs. Saam in the corner and returned to his work to consider in what way he could, in acquainting the steward with the rescue, sufficiently ingratiate himself for an ounce or two of tobacco.

Injurious though they might be to the digestion,

Mrs. Saam, beginning to infer the meaning of things, decided that he preferred the Captain's cabin and titbits from his table to mouse cubes and refrigeration; though he doubted not the superiority of the cubes for those fearless enough to be ignorant, or those daring enough to be learnéd.

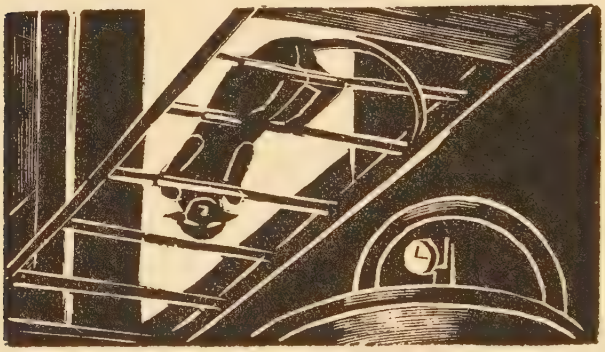
" In this strange human world," he thought, " the ignorant are blest and the learnéd preferred." The thought brought him a strange sensation of loneliness and a determination for action. His instinctive impulse *to do* was followed by analysis, not to modify but to explain it. A habit of comparing humans he began to apply to himself to estimate and adapt himself to their behaviour.

A ringing bell brought him back to the present situation, for he knew that something was about to happen. Humans always did something when a bell rang.

Profiting by the confusion in a dispute between two sailors going off duty, about seniority in the service, he sprang down unnoticed from where he lay in the corner. Making fast for the door at the far end of the storeroom he reached it at the same time as a truckload of frozen kittens was brought in from the hold and tipped upon the floor.

As soon as its porter turned his back to take it up, into the empty truck leapt Mrs. Saam, and lay still. The truck was drawn into the hold, and when

Mrs. Saam felt the change of temperature he leapt out of it and ran off down the keel of the hold. He sped up the gangway at the end, and along a corridor to the doorway of the engine room, which he entered. Odours rising from the engines had, he thought, a savour of cooking; and the temperature was very seductive.



He stood upon a little cocoanut mat, for to go further inside he mistrusted the grating of polished iron bars. Peering over the mat between the bars of the grating, he saw the bobbing pistons of the cylinders below, with their trails of dashing reflected lights. They had a peculiar attraction for him. The rhythmic flutter of their oscillation was for him an abstract expression of the *significant* in his instinct and very stimulating.

The transports of their fascination wrapped him in preoccupation and he forgot he was being pursued. Unconsciously he crouched, quivering as about to spring, staying and preparing with the changes in the cycle of reflections. As a modern artist, he was living for the moment in a world of abstract emotion.

When a shadow of someone appeared in the doorway it brought his artistic reveries to an end. Looking up he saw the sailor he had fled from bending over about to seize him. Nothing remained for him to do but to venture upon the grating. Making off as fast as possible on the treacherous foothold that spanned the beam, he was halted halfway across by his foot slipping between the bars. The sailor in pursuit was not allowed in the engine room unless under orders, but seeing no one about, and being unwilling to lose the chance of capturing

the fugitive, he gave chase. Urged to continue on hearing his approach, Mrs. Saam took a stairway to one side, and descending at his best pace gained distance on his infuriated pursuer.

At the foot of the stairway he found himself on a mat and another landing of iron grating. The unexpected manoeuvre of Mrs. Saam descending the stairway made the sailor hesitate to follow. And Mrs. Saam took advantage of the sailor's hesitation to investigate his position.

Here, the odour was suspiciously unlike that of cooking. On either side were the cylinders he had seen from above with their attractive shining parts no longer visible. " Everything depends upon the viewpoint and one's position in relation to things," he was thinking, when the sailor above, now desperate, started down the stairway after him. At the same time an oiler in overalls appeared from the other side of it.

Looking up at the descending sailor, the oiler cried, " What are you doing here, Nicotine? " for that was the sailor's nickname. When it became apparent to him that Mrs. Saam was the object of Nicotine's intrepidity, he added: " After the ladies again, are you? . . . better get out of here before the Chief sees you."

Mrs. Saam made fussy little circles with his forepaws to express gratitude, and the oiler took him

up as Nicotine retreated. "Honoured to see you here," he said, stroking the cat as he descended to the pit of the engine room. The kitten thought his protector's clothes smelt so strongly of what at first he had taken to be a tasty odour, that now he began to wonder if he really liked it. It was quite different, he discovered, to be taken into the arms of a pleasing confection. The heat increased and the appeal of the place diminished the more one went into it.

In the engine room he thought he had never seen anything like the machines. He could only suppose them to be numerous motor cycles, of different sizes and sorts, all running at once. The din of their shrill and bass voices made him feel

dizzy. When the Chief came along the oiler put Mrs. Saam on a mat in front of the furnace. The Chief had a great influence over the motor cycles. They behaved quite submissively when he stroked them. He paid some attention to one nearby and a cool draught of air poured down on Mrs. Saam. It was very soothing. A stoker opened a door in front and a great red glow rushed out and embraced Mrs. Saam so affectionately that it made him feel

drowsy. He was too scared to move from his position on the mat, and, as the dizziness and drowsiness increased, he thought the concert of voices became louder.

He was gazing at the big red sun in front, when a

cinder fell out and tumbled into a little stream of water — raising a high plaintive voice that drowned all the others.

THE CINDER

Frizzle, frizzle, frizzle.
Life is a game;
Trouble for one's trouble
From mine to flame.

A FLAME

popping out

Now what is this about!
Your brothers in here striving
Enquire why *you* frizz
While they do the " bizz "?

THE SHAFT

a voice deep and slow: coming up from behind and giving Mrs. Saam a fright

Speaking of the work;
If there's any sharing,
Divide it up between
Me and the bearing.

THE FLAME AND CINDER

in chorus

Go slow, old beau;
You take a turn—
Not run the show.

STEAM

jumping down from above furnace and growing enormous as he puffs out his chest

Now about the work:
Honest fellows know
What you shirk
Makes me grow!

THE COLD AIR

creeping down the ventilator

Gentlemen, remain seated!
I looked in to see
You don't get overheated.
If you'll pardon me. . . .

At this assertion the steam burst into tears, at least, it thoroughly chilled and fell in small drops all over the . . .

Mrs. Saam found himself with the chief engineer in the Captain's cabin, the window open, and a fine spray blowing in his face.

"Me-ow," said Mrs. Saam, and continued to

repeat the cry with astonishing inflection of voice. Captain See-m turned and said, " Where did you find him, Chief? " " In the engine room, sir," replied the Chief. " H'm," said the Captain, " Kitty behaved queerly before the storm . . . better have a thorough overhauling, Chief."

Really, Mrs. Saam was denouncing the ship's instruments around him: the barometer, the clock, and the compass. His visit to the engine room had filled him with doubt about the importance of the share they claimed in running the S. S. *Seem.* He imagined he heard them reply perfunctorily to his denunciation: " We thought you said you were interested in the real government of the ship. We're the *real* government and the engine room is labour. Two parties are essential in every good government you know! One of them does no harm. It is governed by the other."

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESCUE

The S. S. *Seem* made a very fair passage and was approaching the Bay of Biscay. Numerous calls made on the way almost doubled the time of the trip that was normal to the speed of her engines. For Mrs. Saam, who was now entering cat's estate, the delay proved a remarkable opportunity for a general education in human affairs; and it must be said for his precocity that he took full advantage of it.

Frequently, at ports of call, Sunday services were arranged for the crew. The lack of modulation in the preacher's voice defeated understanding by

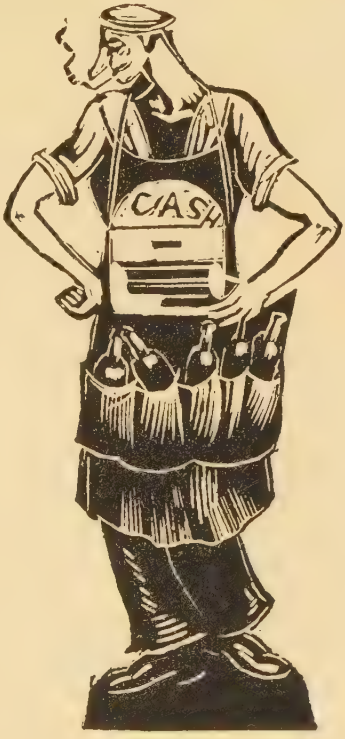
Mrs. Saam's process of deduction, and he was thrown back upon the *word meaning* in which he had never been able to make much headway. Also, the words seemed more obscure. After much endeavour he decided not to attend them for he could not abide the feeling that it was all " above his head."

Mrs. Saam recalled the Captain's words to the crew on the occasion of a fancy dress dance. Before giving them leave to attend he was always ready to help with useful advice. A swell fancy dress dance was to be given by the local Bisons in aid of the Siamese Seamen's Orphans, and preparations for it were afoot among the crew, who contrived to represent something or other in costumes improvised from the ship's scanty resources. Captain See-m called the men together and said, kindly, in a voice that had a touch of gravity, — " Men: I want to say how pleased I am to see the enthusiasm with which you are preparing for the Orphans' Fancy Dress Dance. I have always firmly believed that there is nothing like a little relaxation. At the same time I want to warn you — perhaps to avoid disappointment — that the thing to do is to go to the *fancy* and not to the dress. At the Fancy you are sure to enjoy yourselves, at the Dress, you, with the exception of the prizewinners, are certain to see some dressed better than yourselves.

"No one, of course, would be dressed better than you; for if you thought they could be, you would naturally wear that better dress you thought of. And, in sincerity, you would expect the judges to award the prizes to themselves. They do not award the prizes to themselves for they know that if they intended to do so they would not be *asked* to award them. I therefore urge those of you who are not awarding prizes, to go to the Fancy and cut out the Dress."

Since the night of the storm the crew had made allowances for the Captain. But as they dispersed on this occasion they looked a shade more vacant than usual. Mrs. Saam was very pleased and almost replaced in the Captain as navigator, his faith which had been too severely shaken by the plausible claims of the ship's instruments.

At the ball lots of jolly costumes revealed what were instructive sidelights, for Mrs. Saam, on the psychology of the revellers. The ship's butcher was there in a fierce looking pirate's costume. Mrs. Saam deduced he adopted this as a means of gratifying a complex that was allowed so little play by his companions in the daily social scheme on board. And, as an angel, no doubt the steward sought to gratify, on a small scale, an irascible longing in his soul to fly to his near departed. Nicotine, rigged up to represent a saloon bar, dispensed drinks from various bottles hung about him. Around his neck was a box, with a slit cut in the top for payment and



conduit leading from a hole in the bottom to his trousers pocket. A notice pinned on it bore the testimony: "Cash register — for the orphans — no change given." In such merry spirits as prevailed and for such a worthy purpose, no change was expected.

Others were recognized as: Father Neptune and his court, Highlanders, Pierrots, Battleships and seacraft, Blackeyed-Kaffirs, Whales and Lobsters, Hangmen and Executioners, Royalty, Monsters and deformities — such as the three-legged man, and the one with a mask on the back of his head and his boots reversed, who appeared to be walking backwards.

The costumes of the local ladies were just as imaginative, and showed a marked partiality to oysters. Mrs. Saam made no attempt to explain all the various costumes psychologically.

Every port held some new experience for Mrs. Saam to add to observations that taught him much about humans. Besides, by an acquired process of deduction, he learnt much they said. Sometime, he intended to try the experiment of letting some sympathetic human know he understood. If ever he met one so sympathetic to forget he was a cat.

Human speech first presented formidable obstacles for him. It contained so many words: the cat tongue had but one which was differently inflected for expression, and, in his mind, better for that reason. The cat tongue was deception proof.

The hereditary simplicity of his own speech compelled him to give up an attempt to understand humans through the word meaning of theirs; for he found they so seldom meant exactly what they said. He applied himself to the inflection of the voice, and in this connection, some weeks later, when on a visit to the London Zoo with a young human friend, he listened to a conversation which decided him to keep to the study of inflection.

Two small children with a camera, and their parents

GIRL

Let me take one — you took one!

BOY

'Es trying to get to the other one . . . why?

PAPA

They're restless animiles.

BOY

What are they?

PAPA

Wolfs.

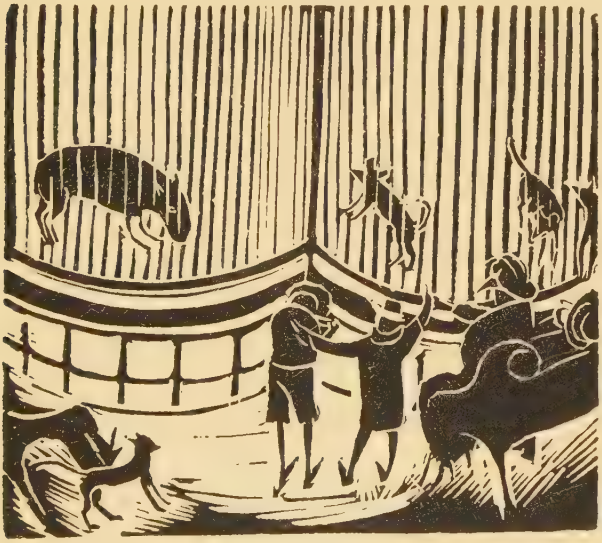
MAMMA

Aren't they lovely — 'es a baby.

GIRL

Where's the old one?
(pointing to a Capybara in another cage)
Oo look! There's the old one.

The word-meaning of this conveyed nothing to Mrs. Saam. He understood from its inflection that



the Capybara was a parent of the beautiful and restless young wolves, and that one of the children wished to take a photograph of them because her

brother had taken one. Mrs. Saam could not always arrive at the meaning so surely and directly; still, there was time for more experience.

Two days after entering the Bay of Biscay the Scilly Isles were sighted to the port; and in a few hours many came on deck to get first glimpse of the coast of England — whose fame for roast beef, coal, the teacosy, and Greenwich time was patent in Siam. Conditions prevented the sight of Land's End, but the Lizard with an overhanging canopy of mist came into view.

Referring to the haze facetiously as the English Temperament, a sailor said it prevented a true view of the land. To assuage the dismay of those on their first trip to the Imperial Headquarters, he added; " It's not so bad when you break through it."

In the evening the wind blew up a bit, and in the dusk the lights on the south coast shone out brightly — as though to defy the " temperament."

When dinner was over the engines of the S. S. *Seem* stopped and she bounced upon the waves. The Captain went on the bridge to pick up the pilot. From the remarks of the sailors as they ran about, Mrs. Saam gathered it was no easy matter, and that

very few pilots would have attempted to be picked up in so rough a sea.

The pilot, by name Swift, came aboad with his daughter and was shown by the steward to the Captain's cabin. " I'll fetch the Captain, sir," said the steward, " he's on the bridge." " I'll come with you steward — you remain here Nancy," said Mr. Swift to his daughter, and went out.

Nancy, a girl in her 'teens, put down her basket and sat upon the couch by Mrs. Saam. " Oh what a darling," she said, stroking the cat — " A real Siamee! " At this Mrs. Saam made a gesture of indignation, he was not used to the manner of foreigners. The voice pleased him but he had learnt on board to mistrust the inflection of the adjectives. It was a long time, however, before Mr. Swift returned with the Captain; and much before then Mrs. Saam became delighted with his companion. Never, he thought, had he so easily understood, or been understood by anyone.

Nancy chatted away, slowly and deliberately, gesticulating and mimicking, as though she knew the cat would understand.

The sliding pane in the front of the cabin was pushed open and the head of Nicotine appeared. " Good evening Missie," he said to Nancy, and pointing to Mrs. Saam, " Will you be good enough to give me the cat. His supper is ready." Taking

up Mrs. Saam in her arms Nancy handed him through the window to Nicotine. As she did so the cat struggled to free himself, uttering so plaintive a cry that she hesitated in obeying the request.

Nicotine had determined upon a plan to get even with a cat that evaded him so often. He calculated the pilot would be picked up at night. Knowing the procedure, he planned to drop Mrs. Saam overboard into the pilot's boat that would wait to take off the mails; then, when the cat's absence would be noticed, to volunteer the information to the steward that he had seen the cat escape too late to prevent it.

Nancy thought over the incident and went out on deck to look for Nicotine and the cat. Leaning over the port rail where the pilot boat was made fast, she saw a sailor descend the ladder a short way and fling something out towards the boat. Her heart beat as the returning sailor pushed past without seeing her. She recognised him as Nicotine. And worse, she saw that the something did not reach the pilot boat. It fell with a curdling splash into the blackness beneath. A faint cry confirmed her worst fear — it was the lovely Siamese cat!

Nancy was not a coward. She had the noblest intuitions, but was reticent to display them before others. Her heart beat fast as, seeing no one about, she clambered over the rail and descended the lad-

der which had been partly drawn up to prevent it being smashed against the side. She could discern the pilot boat keeping off with her engine going slowly, from where she stood upon the lower step, peering into the angry waters.

A gleam from the pilot's stern lantern shone upon the oily surface and revealed what Nancy took to be the struggling cat. Without further hesitation she threw herself into the turgid sea. In silence she fought her way to the surface.

With difficulty she tried to keep out, for she fancied she had jumped short. " Me-ow! " came a desperate cry, and she turned in its direction. After much frustrated effort, she came up with the cat on a crest of backwash from the side of the S. S. *Seem.*

Mrs. Saam seemed to understand: he did not make those frantic struggles to clutch his rescuer that so often endanger both; placing his forepaws on Nancy's shoulder, he quietly drew his head above water and assisted her with his hind feet.

The supreme test for Nancy was to regain the side of the ship before she became exhausted from cold, which she already felt. This she must do alone. She had left the boat unseen by anyone, and by the time she was missed on board it would probably be too late!

In deference to Nancy's dislike of praise, nothing more will be said of her epic heroism in reaching the side and clambering aboard. Let it suffice to say she did.

Captain See-m was telling the pilot about Mrs. Saam's strange warning of the storm, as they entered the cabin together. " Do you like cats, Mr. Swift? " he asked, looking round for Mrs. Saam. " Yes," replied Mr. Swift: " My wife was very attached to Bobby, they were always together — inseparable. We lost the cat soon after her death, since when I have not taken to another. Nancy has shown the same fondness as her mother for animals — Where is she? . . . She came aboard with me and I left her here. . . . "

A knock came at the door and a sailor entered, " The mailbag's ready, sir," he said. " I've noth-

ing for it," said the Captain. " Right sir," said the sailor, going out and closing the door. Mr. Swift fumbled in his pocket and drew out a letter, going to the door he opened it to find Nancy with Mrs. Saam in her arms — standing in the doorway.

" Why, here you are Nancy, I wondered . . . but how wet you are! " Nancy sank on the couch and said she was a little wet but — " it is not much matter." " Is it raining? " enquired Captain See-m. " No," replied Nancy, " It's all right now, (pointing to the cat) he fell over the side, and I just got down to help him up." She resolved to say as little as possible about the matter for she disliked a disturbance. Mr. Swift went to her and said, " But Nancy dear, your teeth are chattering and you are thoroughly chilled." And turning to the Captain, " I think we should do something about getting her to bed and drying her clothes."

Captain See-m said he would place his cabin at her service and fetch the steward. The pilot, who shared his daughter's dislike of a disturbance, said his chief concern was for her health and that it would be much better to let no one know about the incident for the present.

Indicating his chest of drawers and wardrobe, Captain See-m said, " Please to make use of anything," and withdrew. Mr. Swift urged Nancy to take off her wet things as quickly as possible, and

went to get something hot for her to drink. The Captain, who was waiting outside, seemed much affected, and said that such devotion to animals deserved the greatest recognition. Mr. Swift replied that he wished to keep it out of the papers.

When Mr. Swift returned to the cabin he found Nancy in bed and her clothes spread out on the radiators to dry. After drinking the soup he brought, she appeared to be none the worse for her immersion. "Father," she said, "you won't be angry with me. The cat was so much like Bobby — I could not see it drown." "No, my brave girl," said her father, touched by her compassion as he saw with satisfaction that she had taken no harm.

In the morning the S. S. *Seem* entered the broad mouth of the Thames and proceeded on its estuary, and Nancy dressed to walk on deck with Mrs. Saam held snugly in her arms. There was still a little fog hanging over the north shore as Nancy said to Mrs. Saam, "See puss, that's what *he* called our temperament. It's a great advantage to live in some atmosphere for it makes people different altogether from those who live in cloudless climes." She was an intelligent girl and possessed a keen philosophic sense.

When the bell rang for breakfast she returned and came face to face with Nicotine. He was about

to salute her, but as his eye fell upon the cat he turned dreadfully white and tottered to one side for her to pass. The effect upon Mrs. Saam alarmed Nancy, and she tried to pacify the cat with kind words before going in to breakfast.

Captain See-m made no reference to the affair of the previous night, as he had been warned by Mr. Swift; but he showed evident delight on seeing Nancy with the cat at breakfast.

Customs Officers came aboard at Greenwich where the ship docked. Everywhere there was commotion as personal effects were inspected. Mrs. Saam had never felt so lacking in resource. He had long since decided to make a confidant of Nancy and wished to remain with her. For this reason his anxiety increased as he saw her prepare to leave, but he was unable to tell her so. Children often behave in the same way as he did when they have something pressing they are unable to communicate to their parents.

In calm resignation, Mrs. Saam hid under the cabin couch. " The human system half learnt had most terrible penalties. Did anyone know it sufficiently to quite avoid them? " he asked himself. A reasoned answer to this question had to be deferred, for hope showed itself, in Nancy's basket which lay in front of him — opened for inspection. He stepped in and closed the lid.

The customs officer bent over Nancy's basket as Mrs. Saam crouched inside. "No wines, spirits, liquors, scents, tobaccos, cigars?" "No," said Nancy. He chalked the top and Nancy picked up her basket. Mrs. Saam murmured in relief: "I begin to see; the best thing to do is never absolutely to admit a dilemma to one's self."

"Have you the key of the Villa, Nancy?" said the voice of Mr. Swift. "Yes, papa," Nancy replied; putting down her basket and opening the door. Up came the basket once more and down again for the last time.

Mrs. Saam knew the bumping, jolting, lightening, darkening, heating and cooling sensations had come to an end; that he could now relax his tiring resistance to them.

What an ordeal it had been! He went backwards over it: The walk downhill that had crushed him forward. The trip in the tramcar — complete darkness with a little bell ringing, and two dozen kicks. The train journey — the train journey was the worst phase: two dogs in the compartment, from the boastful way they talked, must have suspected his presence in the basket. They fought eventually.

FIRST DOG

Where are you going
My pretty maid?

SECOND DOG

For the course was
My elegance bred.

FIRST DOG

I can see you're a courser
By th' tone o' your sauce Sir.

SECOND DOG

—and you are a ratter,
Or may be a catter!

At this Mrs. Saam's indignation could have risen to break the basket, but he felt that Nancy would expect better of him. "Quarrelsome brutes," he thought in silence and calmed himself. The con-

versation between the dogs ceased and both parties growled. Then:

MASTER OF FIRST DOG

Sorry sir, if my dog
Should to you seem a hog.

MASTER OF SECOND DOG

My dear friend, if one's a hog —
'Tis not your but *my* dog!

FIRST

If you don't agree with me
I'll withdraw the courtesy.

SECOND

Withdraw, if you are so rude.
Your dog says you are a dude!

Mrs. Saam thought the dogs would not understand their masters, and the matter might end there. The train stopped and a ticket collector entered.

TICKET COLLECTOR

Tickets please — a nice dog!

FIRST MASTER

His owner thinks he is a hog.

TICKET COLLECTOR

Speedy with your tickets please,
Dispute the other at your ease.

The door shut, the whistle blew, and the train moved off again.

FIRST DOG

So that you're not getting out
Let's see what you've to talk about.

SECOND DOG

You're lean; I am fatter;
I'm a dog, you're a ratter.

FIRST DOG

Your bloated sides and *la de* air
Couldn't catch a mechanical hare.
Your style and quality so grand
A bite would better understand.

The first dog bit the second dog. The second master struck the first dog with his stick, and the first master struck the second master with his. A fight ensued in which masters and dogs took part and Nancy's basket was overturned. The first master pulled the communication cord. The train stopped. The guard opened the door.

THE GUARD

Has any Mister, Sir, or Lord
Pulled the communication cord?

SECOND MASTER

Yes guard, it was given a pull
By that infuriated fool!

GUARD

Sir, don't raise your voice or shout,
But explain what it's about.

FIRST MASTER

That man's dog and pedigree
Are too much for mine and me.

GUARD

Now the cause is clear as light
For your dog is black
And his dog is white
In a case of argument
A separate compartment
Furnished by the Company
Is here, Sir — step in with me.

Tea had been prepared and Mrs. Smart, the Swift's housekeeper, presided at the tea-table. Neither Mr. Swift nor Nancy referred to the rescue or its consequences. But Nancy told Mrs. Smart

of the beautiful Siamese cat she had seen on the ship.

After tea Nancy retired to change, but in a few moments returned to the dining room with the Siamese cat in her arms. "Nancy! . . ." said her father. "I know what you are about to say, Father," said Nancy, "but it's quite unnecessary. I was entirely unaware he was in my basket. He was no doubt put there by that revengeful sailor." "Of which sailor are you speaking?" enquired Mr. Swift. "Father," said Nancy, "there was a sailor on board who wished him harm; I could see that from the fear the cat had for him. I think we ought to keep him now, for if he were returned I feel something dreadful would happen to him."

Mrs. Saam was put on the rug for the housekeeper's inspection. Mrs. Smart said it would be nice to have him, for the place had not been the same since Bobby went away. And when Nancy told her father of Nicotine's treachery he consented to the cat's adoption.

The Swift household consisted of Mr. Swift, his daughter, and Mrs. Smart. Mr. Swift was not much at home. His duties as a pilot took him away for days together. Nancy Swift attended the Girls' High School, and occasionally on holidays accompanied her father on a passage up and down the Thames. At school she was advanced in her

studies and held a high position in the esteem of her teachers. Blended in her nature was an attractive modesty. It was thought to be inherited from her mother, and was not usually co-incident with such precocity as hers.

Before they came to the Villa, and ere Nancy was out of her 'teens, the Swift family had lived in the country, where most of her time out of school Nancy spent in the fields. She had never been a girl to associate much with other children, and would ever withdraw from them to some sequestered spot in the countryside where she could observe the animal life she loved. Rabbits in the fields adjoining the Swift's garden became so tame with her, that it was remarked upon by the villagers. It was also said that she was sometimes to be observed sitting in the corner of a field quietly sharing her lunch with the robins and crows from the neighbouring rookeries. In time, the wild life came to trust her so that animals would feed out of her hand, and birds perch upon her shoulders.

From early childhood she had given cause for anxiety to her parents, in evincing a strong dislike to eating meat, which she never took except in some disguised form. Since then, with regard for the child's sensitivities, the Swifts had become strict vegetarians; for which much praise is due them.

It is no wonder that Nancy's sympathetic nature

soon made a fast friend of Mrs. Saam. She tried over all the cat names she could think of and eventually christened him Sam, the one to which he answered best, and one by which he regained his appropriate gender.

One afternoon when Mr. Swift had gone away and Nancy and Sam found themselves alone, Nancy said, " A penny for your thoughts, Sam." It was very singular, for Sam had for some time past been puzzling how he could take Nancy into his confidence. First of all he had thought it would be necessary for her to learn the inflection system of speech. Most humans, he knew, learned only the word meaning.

He suspected, but could not fully realize then, what a vast difference there was between the speech of humans and that of cats. In the cat tongue the difference consisted not so much in the stress, as in the spacing and duration of the parts of speech. As in the Morse Code dots and dashes are inflected to form letters and words, so are the *mes* and *ows* of the cat tongue. For the ordinary person, neither the Morse Code nor the cat language was more than an apparent monotonous repetition of sound. At Nancy's remark, " A penny for your thoughts," Sam said something which sounded like me-ow. The strong dash of fantasy in Nancy led her on — " So you wouldn't sell them for a penny, Sam? "

To which Sam replied with three distinct me-ows. " That's too much — now give a plain answer, yes or no, which is it? " enquired Nancy. Receiving no response, she queried, " Yes? " Sam answered " Me-ow," in a certain way and Nancy added, " or no? " " Me-ow," Sam replied — but quite differently.

Nancy was fascinated and repeated each question several times. Each time she received the same answer to the same question. Encouraged, she tried it further while pouring out a saucer of milk. " Would you like some milk? " she asked. " Me-ow," replied Sam. " That means no," said Nancy, quite excitedly. The negative and affirmative were then tried over several times until Nancy felt quite sure of them.

She tried a few nouns. " What's this? " she enquired, touching Sam's paw. " Me-ow," said Sam. " What are these? " she asked, touching his whiskers. " Me-ow," said Sam. Nancy, delighted with the result, went on and on, going over the same words again and again until she had learned the inflection peculiar to all.

Said Nancy to herself, " I suppose no one has ever had a conversation with a cat before. Probably because no one has realized how easy it is. They would, of course, need to find a cat in the same mind as themselves: which makes this a

true coincidence; perhaps the first really important coincidence that has happened to me. If I could find a rabbit that . . . " Here she broke off as the idea came to her that if *Sam* were able to interpret the animals for her — any rabbit would do.

She would not tell Mrs. Smart about this conversation, she decided. For Mrs. Smart required so much convincing of things like that. How could she be convinced? Although she and Sam had understood one another, Mrs. Smart would say it was her imagination, that her blood was overheated, and prescribe aconite for her. — And then how could she prove it to be otherwise? She could not talk the cat tongue even if she could understand it — her vocal chords were no more fitted for cat talk than Sam's were for human speech. But this would not do for the discerning Mrs. Smart, who needed proof much more tangible and spectacular than that before she would pin her faith to it. It would be useless, for example, to point out to Mrs. Smart that she read Greek but did not speak it.

CHAPTER FOUR

ABSTRACTS

Nancy made daily progress with the inflection of Sam's Me-ows, and took every opportunity of keeping in practice. She was able to hold more advanced conversation, but never talked other than small politenesses — except when alone with him. Nancy took care not to do so; in the first place on account of Mrs. Smart's fear of imagination, and in the second, since they had been able to hold easy converse Sam had impressed her with a need for caution.

One afternoon when Mrs. Smart had gone on a visit to friends, Nancy laid aside her studies and tried over some abstract words with Sam. The cat found them difficult. For as he explained to her, a thought and an action or an object are synonymous to most cats. This was very encouraging to Nancy, who had always wondered why some people she knew acted first and thought afterwards when it was so easy for cats to do both together.

They talked away for an hour trying to come to a clear understanding of each other, and Nancy said she would read to Sam. " I wonder what you'd like to hear," she said, looking through her books. " I have it, Sam, I'll read about the Cheshire Cat from Alice in Wonderland! " Nancy exclaimed, as she took out the book and opened it at the page. She read:

'. . . when she was a little startled by seeing the Cheshire Cat sitting on a bough of a tree a few yards off.

'The cat only grinned when it saw Alice. It looked good-natured she thought: still it had *very* long claws and a great many teeth, so she felt that it ought to be treated with respect.

" Cheshire Puss," she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. " Come, it's

pleased so far," thought Alice, and she went on. "Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where . . ." said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

". . . so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if only you walk long enough."

Alice felt that this could not be denied, so she tried another question. "What sort of people live about here?"

"In *that* direction," the Cat said, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter: and in *that* direction," waving the other paw, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.

"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat: "we're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."'

Frequently glancing at Sam as she read, Nancy could see he was highly delighted for he made those characteristic fussy little circles with his forepaws, and ventured the remark; "What a very intelligent

cat: I was always brought up in the belief that the most intelligent cats came from Siam — it was entirely omitted to mention those of Cheshire."

Nancy read on, and shortly came to an illuminating passage:

' " Did you say pig or fig? " said the Cat.

" I said pig," replied Alice: " and I wish you wouldn't keep appearing and vanishing so suddenly."

" All right," said the Cat; and this time it vanished quite slowly, beginning with the end of the tail, and ending with the grin which remained sometime after the rest of it had gone.

" Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin," thought Alice; " but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in all my life! " '

" What is a grin without a cat? " asked Sam of Nancy at this point. " It's an abstract," said Nancy. " This morning you had some fresh milk: if you separate the *fresh* from the *milk* you have another *abstract*."

" Very unsatisfactory, I should think," said Sam. " Yes; I too: I think I shall like the cat's way best when I get used to it. It's often very difficult to keep your place — so to speak — in some of those books," said Nancy pointing to the books on the shelves.

Mr. Swift was an intelligent man and therefore

kept many books, to which Nancy referred, on the abstract and exact sciences.

There were some on philosophy, morality, ethics, biology, religion, navigation, evolution, psychology, and dream analysis. Nancy did her best to explain to Sam the field covered by each; not very successfully, it is feared, for at the end of her pains Sam enquired why a subject like navigation could not have been expanded to cover all the rest. To make his meaning clearer he said that he considered Alice, about whom Nancy had read to him, a first class navigator in circumventing the many awkward situations a wizard like the Cheshire Cat put up to her.

Sam followed this up with an earnest and even more startling question: " Why don't humans propagate the Future Race from girls like Alice — by selection — in the way laid out in that evolution-navigation book? "

" Oh," said Nancy, bewildered at the position Sam's intelligence, yet lack of fuller comprehension, had led him into, " Alice doesn't really exist, Sam, we may call her an *abstract* — that is to say, it is all subjective — it has been written by an author who imagined it all."

" I don't quite see — if you'll pardon me — the benefit of such a practice," Sam said. " For if imagination is to be cultivated couldn't it help to

adapt us to reality as it is? — not to flee from it; flight is sure to cause an irrevocable loneliness, and I cannot see how the gregarious human animal can ever be satisfied with that."

" The author," said Nancy, " was an artist, and artists can do things indefinitely without being satisfied with them."

" Then why do they write for others; they must be very dishonest to do so if they know they are going to be dissatisfied themselves," retorted Sam.

" They are frequently *satisfied* for a time with what they do," said Nancy, — " they are individuals! "

" Then are cats artists too," asked Sam, " for they are individuals," and, " But why do the sheep listen to the individuals? " " They don't," said Nancy, " they keep them because they don't understand them, because they think them beautiful — just as they keep cats — but they never understand or try to understand them."

" You and I artists? " enquired Sam. " Yes," replied Nancy: " I shall be a regulation one when I declare my independence, while you can never share regulation fellowship; for *I* obey noble intuition and you are actuated by animal instinct."

Sam's feelings were wounded by this until Nancy explained that she was only fooling him. Fooling,

she said, was a fair way of getting amusement at a friend's expense, and was considered by some to go a long way towards cementing friendship and sociability. Thus the conversation ended as Mrs. Smart returned and Nancy resumed her studies.

Sam had not been out of doors since his arrival at the Villa but he had peered out under the curtain on more than one occasion. A great desire had

come over him to meet those gallants that serenaded beneath his window in the evening.

In the kitchen he found that Mrs. Smart had left the door open. Going out into the garden he walked round to the front where the cats had been seen. Under the box hedge was a large tabby cat and Sam approached him respectfully. " Good-evening," he said.

" Where may you hail from? " asked the tabby. " Siam," said Sam. " Never heard of it. On a visit here? " asked Tabby. " No — not exactly," said Sam, cautiously deciding to be discreet — " Business and pleasure combined." " Now look here — you haven't run away from home have you? " enquired the tabby, " for you look well cared for and — if you've done anything like that — I'd advise you to go back, for the living round here isn't what it used to be. Cats lead a dog's life in our days."

This piece of well intended advice gave Sam confidence to enquire of the stranger, " Was it you, perchance, I heard serenading round here last night? " " No; bless you youngster! — my serenading days have been over these two years now," Tabby replied. " Then what may be your business here this evening? " demanded Sam. " I devote all my odd time from nursing a passing living, to our Racial Welfare interests," replied Tabby. " I am waiting for a friend I promised to introduce to the Cats' Independent League this evening."

Sam became interested and enquired if Tabby

were an officer of the League. " An officer is a member and a member is an officer," replied Tabby; " for the League, both in word and deed, is independent." " I would like to become member and an officer of the League," said Sam. " You are one," said Tabby; " every cat, at birth, automatically becomes a member of the Independent League."

" Don't you have any resignations? " asked Sam. " No, we've never had one to my knowledge — where is a cat to be found willing to give up his independence? " replied Tabby. " Now, the Well-being but General Misunderstanding of Cats — or whatever it may be called — Society," he added, " has special meetings to deal with resignations; because it is run by humans and they do things that way."

" You seem to have very little respect for humans," said Sam. " On the contrary, the greatest respect, I hope, since they keep me," replied Tabby. " Well, you don't seem to understand them," rejoined Sam. " No, can't say I do. — Do you? " queried Tabby.

Now Sam, who began to feel pretty well put through his pacings by Tabby, without resenting it, but with a conviction that his intelligence was at least equal to that of his interlocutor, took up this question to serve his end, and said, " Yes, I do; "

and — as he thought it best for caution, " — up to a point."

A rustle in the bushes signalled the arrival of Tabby's friend and a lean sandy cat appeared. " My friend," said the tabby, introducing him to Sam. " Good evening," said the sandy cat, " I don't want to interrupt . . . " " Stranger was saying he understood humans," said Tabby.

The sandy cat looked at Sam in great wonder and said, " Then perhaps you can tell me what my mistress meant when she threw a stick at me this morning for talking to the canary, and made a fuss of me when I brought in the parrot from next door." " I should have to know," said Sam, (he was going to say *You* but his policy of discretion warned him not to) " to know *her* better before I could tell just what she meant by that."

" Come, let's go to the League," said the Tabby; (and to Sam) " Are you going to join us? "

They all went into the next garden. " Do you expect many officer-members this evening? " enquired Sam. " I can't say we do," replied Tabby. " Were many invited? " again enquired Sam. " None," replied Tabby. " Then there won't be any there," Sam concluded, aloud. " Everyone knows when to come without being invited — you should know that. — Haven't you a branch in Siam? " " I don't know," replied Sam; " You see

I left when I was rather too young to know about matters of that kind."

"As I said before," said Tabby, "every cat automatically becomes a member at birth, so I don't see how you could be too young. Unless you mean we are all too young and are always likely to be — for if cats had more than nine lives there would be no need for a League of Independence. Our experience would look after that for us; but, because our lives are short compared to those of our guardians, we must look after our own independence."

"That's just what I did mean," said Sam, and, "Now tell me what business have you on hand?" "None, fortunately," said Tabby, "business al-

ways interferes with a purpose like ours, and consequently too much of it would soon ruin the purpose altogether."

As Sam was about to ask another question, Tabby went on, " the last business we had to deal with was the question of a Government tax on cats. It would have been a bad thing for us and greatly reduced our population if it had passed a majority in the Government."

" Our independence doesn't depend on numbers, does it? " enquired Sam cautiously, both making a statement and asking a question. " Yes, it does," rejoined the tabby; " for the more one has to be independent ' of ' the more independent one is."

A man in his shirt sleeves ran out as they crossed his garden. " Hi . . ." he shouted, chasing them off.

" Seeing that you understand humans, can you explain *that one?* " asked the sandy cat of Sam. " I would have to know more about him to interpret a simple word that might mean almost anything," replied Sam.

" It seems you have to know more about them all to be of any definite help to a body," said Tabby, rather abruptly.

" That's just what I will have to do," said Sam, feeling he was making an impression in spite of a

head wind. " It is what I am doing; what I left Siam to do; and what I meant when I said I had come on business and pleasure combined."

" How's that? " asked the sandy cat. " It's like this," said Sam, rising as one elected and assuming the role of a diplomat. " My pleasure will be in the company of such companions as yourselves, and my business will be to understand humans so that the independence we enjoy here may be brought to our brothers and sisters in foreign lands."

Sam paused to watch the effect, and saw every door in a row of houses opened at once, or so nearly so that it produced an awful foreboding impression of danger. And the three cats, urging each other forward, tore down the road.

So quickly did they go that Sam lost touch with his feet and felt himself supported as though on wings. And as he floated along, inanimate things — going in the opposite direction — took on personalities. " These," it flashed through his mind, " are the abstracts Nancy has told me of."

THE CEDARS

with the door wide open

Oh what a relief to get away
And let one's bad feeling out.

THE FEELING

following the cats down the street

I am the ABSTRACT freed,
You — the HOUSE remaining.
GOODHOUSE separate!
GOOD . . . that's me:
HOUSE remains and
Bad is inferred.
In = to enter;
Ferr'd or fired =
Burnt up — in the grate:
So there is some
Service for you yet.
Good-bye, House.

THE VENETIAN BLINDS OF THE CEDARS

blowing out

Ah me, how fresh out here.

They split into halves

ONE HALF

following the cats

I'm HANDSOME: how wretched it is
To be blind. Wretched blind!
Ha ha — wretched abstract
You stay with the BLIND! —
Not entirely useless if
The blind sympathises.

THE LOVE NEST

singing the Marseillaise and running to catch up with the party

Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!
LIBERTY, that is me.
Equality, Fraternity—
They are the house and garden.
Good-bye HOUSE and GARDEN.
You won't be angry, dears,

When you realise
How absurdly incongruous
Our combination has been.

I've always given way to please you —
Not that I haven't enjoyed it — still,
One can have too much of a good thing.
— Keep things going;
I may come back if winter is sharp,
And you are not overcrowded with guests.

THE CASTLE

opening its door to let something out, as a blare of trumpets sounds from within

Ah oh, the fresh air at last!
This is worth all.
Fills me with admiration and gratitude
For all those stubborn and gouy obstacles
That have kept me in such ignorance
I did not know my name —
Until they let it out.
VICTORY, that is me.

Joining the rest

Good-bye DEFEAT,
You stay behind but don't despair:
You'll make a magnificent old ruin
For the tourists.

The pace that Sam and his companions had been making steadied up a little, and Sam, out of breath, said, " All the abstracts about here seem to be married or affianced — from the touching farewells they took before following us." The sandy and the tabby cats looked very dumb at this remark. And again, when he enquired, " Do they attend the League meetings? " they flushed with dumb looks. Tabby said to Sandy, " I suppose he is talking his *human* notions again — for I don't understand him."

" Then I take it, you didn't see those abstracts pursuing us? " asked Sam, who had overheard Tabby's comment.

" — Saw some humans of the Anti-Cats' Mutual rush out at us in anger — for they can't bear to hear us talking in the street — what do you think we ran for? " replied Tabby.

" I see," said Sam, " our thanks are due to you — I must confess I am not used to the ways in these parts," thinking it better to drop the subject of abstracts although he knew they were being followed by them.

It might be, he thought too, that he would be the only one at the meeting aware of their presence — total ignorance of such powerful libertine forces would be very dangerous to the well-being of the community.

They stopped by the front garden of a vacant house, and Tabby waited politely for Sandy and Sam to pass in front of him. The three cats trooped through a hole in the fence and along a wriggly path to a large overgrown garden at the back of the house.

A weedy gravel and cat-trodden path led them to a clearing of grass now in seed, at one time a tennis lawn, surrounded by a flower bed which was enclosed by a broken wooden trellis draped in the faded glory of Virginia creeper, and surmounted on a crumbling brick wall. Lilac shrubs, flags, and some aged and bloomless chrysanthemums thickly populated the surrounding beds, while syringa bushes and stocks concealed a taller wall at the back that was covered with senile ivy and divided the garden from the playground of the local boys' school. The leaves of old ivy were grey with the dustwash of London's suburban showers; the grimy caress of prosperity.

The tabby led the procession of three into the centre of the arena — to Sam, in the dusk, a melancholy and meditative place with very long rank grass, except in the centre where a smooth clearing was occupied by the meeting.

A strange gathering of the clans was present. Cats of all conditions, race, and race-mixture rose as the new-comers entered, and making a low

me-ow in salutation they said in chorus: "Welcome brother officer members!" Sam and the sandy cat, at a nod from Tabby, took places in the ring and the gathering sat.

In the silence that ensued upon their entry, Sam attempted to take some account of those present. But the number and subtle variety of cats outwitted all his attempts at classification. In the numerous types and colourings, there were shades of character and hue that led his judgment by imperceptible steps from one to another of outstanding difference.

Until a member *felt* something, no one spoke. Thus it frequently happened that two or more members spoke at the same time. To the stranger, this custom was a little disconcerting. But sooner or later the speaker with the most impressive line of talk would subdue the others to absolute quiet. And if he became vague or obscure the assembly would drop off to sleep with expressions so alert that they never lost the semblance of a waking interest in the speaker — the absence of which would have been a breach of etiquette.

Members moved to speak made reports but nothing was discussed. Each, upon hearing the notions of the speaker, decided for himself in what way — if any — he should modify his own con-

duct. There was no president, no order, and no disorder. That some had come for the social possibilities, with no interest in the business of the meeting, was obvious to Sam from the many disquieting glances he received from ladies in the back benches.

Sam noticed that he was the only Siamese cat present. There were no *shades of Siamee* to graduate the effect. With their eyes upon him, he became conscious of his conspicuousness.

During a silence of unusual duration he looked round to find an expression of quiet expectation, that could not be ignored, on every face turned towards him. Clearing his throat he began: " Members and Officers of the Cats Independent League. On the authority of the honourable member, Tabby, I address you as an overseas representative of the League of Siam.

" I have listened with great interest to what our members have had to say this evening, and were I ever so well acquainted with the subject of their remarks — which I am not — I could add little or nothing to their wisdom. I can, however, speak of a subject which the chance circumstances of my travels have obtruded under my observation, one which has probably evaded that of the honourable members: it is concerning our position in Human Civilization.

"In a savage state, man made the knife with which he gained a great physical ascendancy over the earth's inhabitants. This knife he used for every purpose. Mounted on a shaft he employed it for slaying his quarry, as a cat uses its claws; to skin it, and to make from the cured skin harness and equipment for his horse, and robes to clothe himself. When he left the caves he used this knife to shape a frame for his habitation. At first he made his knives of flint and bone, and then of hard metal, bronze and iron. Man became master of all in mastering the use of his knife. It established his superiority to destroy it thousands of years later. (But of that another time.)

"With this powerful agent and in the course of time he used up the local supply of game. He

domesticated some of the animals to supply him with food, and some to supply him with slaves; as the horse and the dog.

" The cat — a tiger in his domicile — served to flatter his vanity; to personify his sway over the beasts of the forests.

" Providence was at work. All the animals save the cat were threatened with gradual disappearance, either by extinction or domestication. As her natural resources became limited by the ravages of man, the cat insinuated her race upon him for domestication: for no servility, for her beauty alone.

" Long after this emanation of the cat as survivor *per se*, as surely as the dog lost all of special racial character by subjection to domestication, so did man when he subjugated himself to the knife. He did not realize that he then held all the cards of mastery in his hand, and that, as an excited and improvident gambler, he was throwing them away. Two knives were put together, and lo! scissors appeared. Intoxicated by experiments, he began to multiply the blades. And the more complicated his implements became the more restricted were their uses.

" At one time, with a blade in his belt, he wandered superior. With it he caught and killed, skinned and cured, worked at his house or habita-

tion; made a comb, shaved a beard, and in fact did everything for his daily need by its aid. Now, his knives have become so unwieldy that not a dozen men can move one a mile in a month, nor, with one, can he serve more than one purpose. He must have a complicated knife for each of his hundred wants. Each of his knives requires from one to twenty men to attend to it while it enslaves them to one place — to do one thing for life. The all powerful individual has lost his birthright, or better, sold it to the machine. For what? — for an illusion of ease and leisure!

" The new mechanical master falls sick from rheumatism, heart failure, or anything from a baby ailment to the more serious senile decay, and he is waited upon by man the serf. A hundred wires search out the serf in his bed. A bell compels him to wake and dress with haste and little food and to assemble at an appointed place — at the command of His Majesty the Machine! Here, with anxious care and in abject subserviance he slaves to attend upon his master's slightest ill. On his back out of doors, in winter and summer alike, he welters in his concern to discover the seat of his master's malady. Covered from head to foot in the oily black sweat that drips from his Sire, he grovels to please and adjust as he gropes and gazes up into the very bowels of his

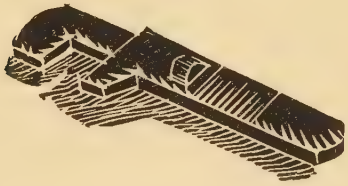
lord. And the success of his surgical skill ties faster his bonds.

" Officers and members of the Cats' Independent League: this is the picture we have upon the one hand. And yet, on the other hand, there's an-

other picture, proportionately more favourable as it is smaller. But of this more favourable picture I have yet only a partial view. I must have time and assistance — not only from you but from hu-

mans too — to piece it together so that it may be judged and assessed at its proper value.

" Man has gone deeply into a mesh and, to a certain extent, his impending ruin has involved that of his dependent, *felis domestica*. How much — as is clearly pointed out — rests with you *in your duty towards yourselves.*"



CHAPTER FIVE

EVOLUTIONISTS

Sam's speech brought forth burly remonstrances from the entire party. Without giving consideration to its import, without heed or gratitude for his good intentions, a lusty volume of indignation in the multitude arose against him. As only the voices of independents can, their voices blended in one stupendous wail of injured pride.

To Sam the tenor of its meaning was plain: he had threatened their independence with a suggestion of proffered advice. Dialectics would be tolerated by the hour. He decided, he must answer and explain and when it was propitious he would *ask*.

" À bas, à bas! " arose the hydra voice.

" Gainsayer of my independence who is *he* to come between me? " [1] It spoke again, rising high and wide as a whirlwind. Until, in his mind, Sam was like unto the apex of a hollow inverted cone. The while the voice continued Sam gazed upward and imagined he would never escape the slippery and increasing high walls of his conical prison. He grew fainter as the voice spiralled above him.

" Give us mice
But keep your advice
On other cat's ways
And ladybird's stays
Or grossälterlich [2]

" Vice of politic frays
The ene-man [3] plays
On the sword and lute.
The dumb and mute do
Surprise and amaze

[1] English cats speaking collectively on racial matters use the first person singular. The King uses the first person plural.

[2] The me-ow for this is better rendered in the German *Grossälterlich;* meaning, pertaining to parental.

[3] Ene-man = enemy + man. Enemy implies Man in the cat tongue.

"Men so astute to
Create a dispute;
Who yet — on their knees —
Are worried by fleas,
Insects of *no* repute.

"Gibberish!" thought Sam, in his delirium induced by the persistent monotony of the voice. But it went on:

"Independantees
Consider that these,
Broken chair menders
And advice vendors,
Are not worth a sneeze.[1]"

"That sort of abracadabra-catchword rubbish appeals to the masses," Sam murmured to himself

[1] Cuss or curse has been rendered 'sneeze' for cats do not swear. "The peculiar noise they make, often described as swearing," Professor Katz in his able 'Study of the speech of Monkeys and the Lower Animals,' says: ". . . is a voluntary emission . . . a relic of a natural means of protection. In the octopus a cloud of sepia which it ejects when menaced. . . . *Cats* may be trained to do without it."

It may be interesting to note here: The old dragons of legend are said by some authorities to have given out, as a means of protection against the onslaughts of gallant knights, great clouds of smoke and steam with fierce growlings or swearings that shook the earth. It is curious that this ancient smoke screen should have given place to purring or growling in the natural species — except the octopus — whereas in modern warfare, the drumming or growling has been succeeded by a smoke screen; just the reverse.

after a pause, during which he regained his senses and found himself outside the cone. He continued, " — but I must take warning from it and in future be careful for they are mighty easily offended."

As the vision of the cone dispelled the volume of voice diminished and Sam listened to it take up his defence in the speech of Tabby, who had distinct gifts as a heckler and was proud of his acquaintance with the distinguished foreigner. In the characteristic way of one of a rising reputation, Tabby's voice rose above the others and eventually subdued them.

" Members," he said, " while I wish in no way to uphold what you so justly condemned in the stranger's conduct," (the crowd echoed with approval) " I would like to point out that *unanimous agreement sacrifices independence,* and places us in a somewhat anomalous position. For you see we are charging the stranger with the intention to gainsay what we ourselves are so ready to relinquish."

A murmur of uneasiness went round. " I feel sure that no intelligent cat as — " (Sam bowed as the tabby looked towards him, and said, " My name is Sam,") " — as Sam, would risk his honour to assail a virtue we hold in so little regard."

Noting signs of dividing opinion, he continued, " There is, I believe, a code of honour among hu-

mans by which independence is secured by dependence. It may sound paradoxical but I put the suggestion to you to listen to other paradoxes than our own, and ask Sam to show us the second picture."

Sam again took the platform. This time in a circle that was somewhat subdued by Tabby's words. With a glance of gratitude at Tabby he began, " Mr. Chairman and members:

" I made an allusion some time ago to another picture of man's activities, which, through your chairman, you call upon me to give."

At the mention of " chairman " so much disturbance was made that Sam was unable to go on. A grey persian me-owed above the rest, " What have we to do with Chairmen? " Another, a tortoise-shell, said, " Talk the cats' English, member, so a humble working member can understand; not a lot of legal stuff! "

Undeterred by the interruption, Sam demanded, when it lagged a little, " Do you wish to see the second picture, independents? " There were many cries of " Yes " and a few dissentient " No's," and Sam, ignoring the minority, declared, " . . . Then you have a chairman! " " How so, member? " asked the sandy cat, speaking for the first time.

Sam saw they were biting and chuckled to him-

self — " This is better than the disastrous method of offering advice." And he cried aloud, " Because you would not be able to see it without the services of the member who obtained order, after my unpardonable breach of etiquette in offering advice to a league of independents."

" How modest he is! " said a manx to a half persian. She looked at him and replied, " Yes, and handsome too." " Go on member," shouted a third voice from the back.

" I can go no further without a proper constitution," said Sam. After much fuss a number of eager youths demanded that a proper constitution be provided there and then.

" I have heard upon good authority that every government has two parties," explained Sam; but he did not give the reason as he understood it —- :

" Those members of a Natural Society who are destined to *non survival* become the lawless and seditious element of a Constitution. Preserved from extinction by organization, they are relegated to the more innocuous sphere of activities in the Liberal and Democratic opposition. The Tory party when in power delegates some of its younger and more ambitious members to be converted to the opposition. By this means of dilution it keeps the opposition vote below proof. Whenever it becomes over diluted its original *non survival* mem-

bers leave it to form a new and more vigorous opposition. It — now completely Republican in outlook — goes into power. Conversely: should the Liberals obtain power, while ' overproof,' the Conservatives ' convert ' to dilute them at the bye-elections."

When two parties had been temporarily formed and Tabby elected chairman, Sam proceeded without further interruption:

" Man has elevated himself above the lower animals, made his conscience easy, and denounced his antecedents — his backward brethren who sought and still do seek in bloody wars of extermination, to justify the slogan that *might is right*. In his baser moments, man is yet subject to this inherited tendency; but, as master, in a more humane and civilised way.

" Do you realise, brothers, that if man chose to put a tax upon you — no more than he puts on his tobacco — one out of ten or less of you would survive? And you, to protect his conscience, would die at the hands of the Royal Humane Society for Cats and Dogs, less painful deaths than the average man!

" Dealing with his own and other species alike,

man has spread into the furthermost corners of the earth. He has brought the beauties of tropical colourings, in skins, feathers, and plants, to brighten the dull mist of his grey north, while everywhere he has left behind his neutral tinge.

" A great God of Fashion, served by a merchant priesthood, ransacks the world's resources of change to keep him ever lustrous in the dim northern eyes of his people, and the skins of the great forest cat warm his feet before a fire of black stones. Convents and monasteries of special sects are built in the minds of men to glorify the magnificence and various aspects of his being.

" The International Brotherhood of the Press works ceaselessly with hand and mind to hew down daily a forest of timber, to print in newspaper tracts and pamphlets the prayers of the ardent and faithful, and, by ignoring, suppress dissenters.

" Ships, trams, trains, planes, and submarines, are man's toy servants and he is their real master — for they seek in vain to disregard his indomitable will. He has taught them his cunning and is reliant upon their service. Without them he would be lost — destroyed. Various societies constantly bestow awards of honour upon his toy's attendants, while they, the toys themselves, are ignored in complete unrecognition.

" His favour for most is dearly purchased: sheep

clothe and feed him; horses carry his burdens; the dog guards and warns him.

" The cat does none of these for him. Yet there are some men who for her have risked their lives! "

Cries of " No! No! " signalled Sam's last remark, and he added with assurance:

" I can vouch for the accuracy of my statement, friends, for it happened in my favour. . . . But for the disinterested catmanity of Nancy I would not be here to speak to you this evening."

The attitude of the cats took a sudden change during the excited interest aroused by Sam's assertion. Details were requested by anxious enquirers pressing round him. He gave them the story of Nicotine's treachery and Nancy's heroic rescue. He told them more: how Nancy had learnt to understand the cat tongue, and that she had been his chief source of information on human affairs.

The effect was magical and he became at once the admiration of all. They crowded him with questions in their eagerness to learn more. As they broke up he promised, in response to a general request, to bring Nancy and introduce her at the next meeting.

Tabby's friend, the sandy cat, stayed for the Social but Tabby walked home with Sam.

" Nice lot of fellows," said Sam to his companion, by way of opening a conversation. " Yes indeed,"

replied Tabby " — too nice — their meetings are regular and they speak in sincerity about anything they happen to *feel,* but they are so self centred it never comes to anything. How can it be expected for the majority to be interested in an Independent's individual point of view? " " Very delightful," said Sam, diplomatically, " — though not very apt to keep one up to date." " No, you're right there. You're the first I've heard speak of external affairs. I was surprised at the way they took it . . . thought you'd get into difficulties . . . but you intrigued 'em and it was startling to see them freshen up with interest and enthusiasm."

" Dear member," said Sam, touched by Tabby's sympathy and admiration, as he placed his paw upon Tabby's shoulder and gave it a friendly pat, " — I owe it to your statesmanship that I pulled through! "

" Well I'll leave you here," said Tabby, when they came up to the white gate of the "Love Nest." " When is the next meeting? " enquired Sam. " Oh you'll know," said the Tabby. They bade, " Goodnight."

" Where were you last night? " said Nancy, putting down a saucer of milk for Sam's breakfast.

" Purr-ow, purr-ow . . . I was kept late at the office," Sam replied curtly but politely. " Don't you think you might take the key or leave a note? Mrs. Smart was awfully put out about it, Sam. She rang up the Home for Stray Cats and Dogs," said Nancy, regarding Sam curiously.

Mrs. Smart came in to lay the breakfast. " Upon my soul the cat's back! " she said. " Our luck will not be broken by losing him. I'd quite given him up." " Yes; a bad penny," said Nancy. " I'm sure you don't mean it Nancy," said Mrs. Smart. " When the gen'leman at the Home asked me to give his description, I said ' He's an intelligent lookin' Siamee, and he talks.' ' We don't get that kind here,' he says, ' you'd better ring up the Houses o' Parliament — they specialise in those qualifications in the govermint.' . . . So that's where you've been puss! "

" Me-ow," said Sam.

" He says, ' yes, I have,' " said Nancy.

" Then I hope he'll bring down the price of coal this winter." said Mrs. Smart, placing the aconite on the table before Nancy.

" There is something about that woman that makes me nervous," said Sam to Nancy, when Mrs. Smart had gone to the kitchen. " She is very fond of you Sam," said Nancy " — and she is a dear simple soul." " She is very smart," inter-

posed Sam. "Oh Sam! really, it is unforgivable to pun upon a person's name," said Nancy, angrily. "But she *is*," persisted Sam with innocence, "Or how should she know about my business last night?" "Rest assured she doesn't," said Nancy, stroking him. "In place of insight she has a big heart. The clerk at the Stray Cats' and Dogs' Home was no doubt amused at her simplicity." "Are you sure she doesn't consort with abstracts?" inquired Sam incredulously. "Quite sure," replied Nancy smiling. Sam told her everything.

How he had made the acquaintance of Tabby from the "Love Nest"; and how he went with him and his friend Sandy from the Castle, to a parliamentary meeting of the Independent League; narrating in great detail their pursuit down the street by abstracts which had revealed themselves to him but of which his companions had been unaware. Surely spirits that pursued him and telephoned his doings to Mrs. Smart were malignant.

Nancy listened and with much feeling shared the reality of his unfounded fears. When they were alone she took him into her arms and told him he had nothing to be afraid of but his own conscience. She assured him Mrs. Smart had no belief in his understanding and ability to speak. Parliaments and intelligence she told him were common butts of ridicule among ignorant but well

intentioned people, and Mrs. Smart's telephone conversation — made in humorous derision of the idea — was all the dear simple soul was able to participate in his emancipation. She had found an intellectual level in the clerk at the Home for Stray Cats and Dogs and they had enjoyed a little harmless amusement together. " Why," exclaimed Nancy, " ' It's enough to make a cat laugh ' is a common expression among the unenlightened — so absolutely impossible is it considered."

The conversation came to an end when it was time for Nancy to go to school. But in the evening Sam returned to it again.

Sam became pensive when Nancy left him. The day was bright and he spent the greater part of it alternately reflecting and dozing, on the piece of oilcloth warmed by the sun in Mr. Swift's room, a pastime that was becoming habitual with him. When he was bored, he paid frequent visits to Mrs. Smart in the kitchen, tried to set aside their misunderstanding and see the " good old soul " Nancy saw. " What a faulty system," he thought, " it must be to permit two people like Nancy and Mrs. Smart to speak the same language, and yet never be able to understand one another. It is a disguised blessing to be thought unable to speak at all."

On the oilcloth reflections again visited Sam; this time the Intellectual and the Ignorant:

An intellectual fool and
A learned ignorant
Went to see an eel in
The region of Levant.

The intellectual one said,
'Vision alters shape;
'A *snake* may become an *eel*
'In a jellied lake.'

The ignorant responded
In an affected tone:
'I oft' confused have been—
'Feeding my dog at home.

'I brought a crab to my dog,
'And both were disappointed.
'To corn I led a hog,
'And they were both *delighted*.

'Grain you see is glad to be —
'As everybody knows —
'Consumed and then set free
'In tissue adipose.

'There is no good reason
'In the index of sensation,
'When it's not in season
'With the laws of mutation.

'Change it may by changing *it,*
'Or change by changing *you;*
'Tis great wrath to "hit on it"
'And find the converse true!'

The ignorant answered
To the brainy fool:
'I could see your point
'But could I see your rule!'

The eel leapt on the bank
To settle the dispute.
He quietly became
A blank and then a newt.

'Ha haha,' said the intellect,
'He follows Darwin's rote,
'And will, by torsions indirect,
'Evolve a billy goat!'

The lake split there before them,
Its sides became remote,
And comfortably stridden
An island in a moat.

The zealots, in the morning,
Every second or so,
Took down in extra shorthand
All things they *wished* to know.

Nancy was seated at needlework in the evening, when Sam spoke. "I say Nance, what would you call a man who gave crabs to his dog?" "What a strange idea, Sam, no one would think of doing such a thing," said Nancy. "But he did," said Sam. "Who did?" asked Nancy. "That's just what I want to know," said Sam. "I have my suspicions, but I don't want to tell them to you until I hear what you have to say; for I know what you think will be right." "H'm," Nancy said thoughtfully, "I'm not good at riddles — a scientist?" "Do they always feed their dogs upon crabs? And what do they feed their cats upon?" asked Sam. "I can't say they feed their dogs on crabs as a general rule, but a natural scientist often experiments," said Nancy. "What peculiar natures they must have," said Sam.

"What would a man who followed Darwin's rote be?" Sam enquired. "Oh, he'd be an evolutionist!" said Nancy. "What would he feed *his* dog on?" asked Sam. "He might not have a dog," said Nancy, trying to make an evasion of the point. Sam thoughtfully said, "No, perhaps not. But if he had a newt would it be normal for him to try to evolve a billy goat from it?"

"Sammy, Sammy, what are you dreaming about?" said Nancy; "Evolutionists do not evolve animals, they merely hold the theory that

one species evolves from another." "—that newts are the legitimate parents of billy goats?" asked Sam. "With a little poetic licence, yes," said Nancy, thinking a metaphor might help to clear the matter. "Would the *little poetic licence* be the father or the mother of the billy goat?" enquired Sam, doggedly. "The father, I imagine," said Nancy, "as the wish is father to the thought." "I see," said Sam at last, in a perfectly satisfied tone of resignation. *"The Evolutionist goes about giving birth to his thoughts, through the parentage of a wish on the father's side and any animal it may fall in love with on the mother's."*

Nancy continued her work feeling helpless under the burden of responsibility for Sam's conclusion. Nothing more was said for some time. Suddenly Sam exclaimed, "By the way, you must come to our next meeting of the Independents; I promised you would." "I should just love to," said Nancy.

Mrs. Smart was called upon to give evidence at the trial of a woman taken for stealing in a baker's shop. A notice was served upon her at the Villa, the address she gave to the constable at the time of the incident.

She had been to Goldberg's, the baker's, to get some cakes for tea, and was looking in the window when a furtive figure of a woman slipped past her into the shop.

The woman leaned against the low screen of the window, deftly snatched up a loaf and ran off. Before she had got many yards outside in the dark, a policeman seized her and led her back into the shop. She cried a bit. The policeman tried to pacify her, and said, "Come on mother, pull yourself together!" He then asked Mr. Goldberg, while the customers in the shop all stared, if he had served the woman with a loaf. "No," said the baker. The policeman lifted the poor woman's cloak and revealed the loaf. Mr. Goldberg said

he had often missed bread from that corner of the window, and had thought of putting dummy loaves in there. "I'd better make an example of her, though I hate to do it." The policeman then came and demanded Mrs. Smart's name and address as a witness.

"You must take Sam with you to the trial," urged Nancy, as Sam, who was very interested in the affair, had asked her to. "It would never do to have a cat in court Nancy," said Mrs. Smart. "It's awfully lucky! I think if they had more cats in court, a lot of deserving people would be let off," Nancy pleaded. "You could take him under your cloak and he would never be noticed."

Mrs. Smart felt very sorry for the poor woman and Nancy's appeal succeeded through her superstition in the luck of cats. On the day of the trial Mrs. Smart set off carrying Sam under her inverness, telling him to keep still.

When the trial came on, she was led out of the waiting room to the witness box by a Sergeant who placed a chair for her to sit upon. She stood up and slipped Sam out from under her cloak on to the chair, where he could not be seen. When the proceedings commenced Sam sprang up and sat beside Mrs. Smart on the front of the witness box where he could see.

The prisoner was charged with stealing a loaf of

bread from the baker's shop of Mr. Goldberg in Mercy Street, Golden Green. To the charge she pleaded guilty in a faint voice and with much emotion. The Sergeant said it was her first offence, and the Judge asked her if she had anything to say. She wept bitterly and said she was about to return the loaf when the policeman took her.

"Why don't you work to earn an honest living?" asked the judge. "I've 'ad no time fer 'ardly anyfing sinse me 'usbin died; more 'an look arter me sevin childrin." "What was your husband?" asked the judge.

"E 'ad ter do wi' 'orses, Sir, 'e useter buy 'em in the streat haccidint's . . . we picked a tidy livin' in them diys . . . wot wus too tuff fer sossidges we biled up in th' copper an' took round fer catsmeat on Toosdees an' Fridees . . . the moters come an' ousted th' 'orses frum the streats, an' when that 'appened, me 'usbin an' 'is bruvver wot's dead — alwize natty wi' 'is ideas — went in fer buyin' moter smashups . . . they 'ad a barrer in th' Laine; fer the sile, perchise, an' hexchinge o' spares . . . them wus better diys too; but arter the glut, an' th' 'igh competishun ter contend wi', it war'nt no more 'an a poor pickin's . . . 'is leg, wot the Zulus hassegied in th' Boer War, turned on 'im an' 'e 'ad ter give up 'is barrer — afore we come ter Woollich . . . an' — but 'e

wer'nt beat no 'ow — 'e bought th' hornimints frum demolished churches an' chappills, an' sold 'em fer gardin dekairashuns . . . 'e got a bit 'andy wid 'is tools an' could easy put a coupill o' 'undrid yerrs on 'em — if 'e got a call fer it like . . . in th' 'ight o' prosperitie we 'ad a bit o' rottin luck: 'e got a figer frum a church wot wus took over be a chappill — they dun want no idolitary,

an' they giv it 'im . . . it was a big figer — reg'lar angry looking bloke we useter call Gladstone 'cause 'e looked so bloomin' glad 'e wus jist a bit o' stone an' not alive, 'ad'n't 'arf a miseribile hexpreshin . . . one diy a dealer bloke come an' aks'd Bill if 'e'd got hanyfing in th' antique line; sed 'e wus hexpectin' a guy frum Americar . . . an' Bill says yus, an' 'e put a coupill o' 'undrid

yerrs on ole Gladstone one sundiy arternoon . . . well — it aint no good agoin' inter th' 'ows — things got wus an' wuss, til Bill died —sinse then many's th' di' we bin wi' art a spek ter eat."

During the prisoner's statement the usher noticed Sam on the witness box, but the story of a poor woman's life held the court in such awed silence that he was left undisturbed. When she had finished, he said, " There's a cat in court m'Lord." " Yus, an' aint it luckey! " said the prisoner, drying her eyes that had moistened with tears. " Let it remain," said the judge, and he turned to the jury to address them, much affected by what he had heard.

" Gentlemen of the jury: We must consider ourselves privileged to have listened to what, in my forty years experience at the bar, is perhaps the most touching epic of stoic suffering that has come before the court. That this woman who stood by her husband — a man whose resource and ingenuity were almost inexhaustible, and who the fateful change in modern conditions left behind, and no doubt in the end killed — that she should stand before you this morning upon a charge of stealing a loaf of bread for her little ones is a slur upon the good name of English justice."

The effect of the judge's words was to free the

confined feelings of those present. The jurymen returned a verdict of guilty (upon the prisoner's plea) adding a strong recommendation to mercy.

The judge said he regretted that the court funds were non-existent, and dived underneath his robes into his trousers pocket to produce a generous handful of silver coins which he placed in an envelope and motioned it to go round the court. The members at the bar subscribed liberally. The constables and sergeant on duty contributed their share. And the constable who made the arrest placed his shilling in the passing envelope. Mr. Goldberg said she might keep the loaf and offered to withdraw the charge.

A constable brought into court a helmet full of coppers collected from the police on duty outside, and Mrs. Smart emptied her purse into it.

Goodwill spread so wonderfully and simply that the prisoner was overcome and had to be helped from the dock. When the judge said "I dismiss the case," the prisoner could only half turn, sob, and throw kisses into the court.

CHAPTER SIX

JUSTICE

Sam had been affected by the trial in court. He knew that cats had a great deal of sympathy for themselves, and Tabby, he recollected, was not without a feeling of gratitude for the humans who kept him. That human feelings could so spontaneously awaken and spread like an epidemic in the interest of some unfortunate one, was a revelation to him. How could such fellowship fail to win throughout?

The judge had referred to the poor woman's

stoic independence after her husband's heroic battle with discouragement. She would steal, but would not desert her children to work. She had unblushingly and innocently told the judge of the sale of horseflesh for sausages, and the faking of stone carvings. He had overlooked her faults: he knew that poor material needed a little window dressing to market profitably and felt sorry for her.

What justice! Could cats claim anything like this in their attitude toward the less fortunate of their race? They looked upon them as equals, but was that of any use? — rather, it increased one's difficulties to be treated as an equal when one was not up to it. The judge had not hesitated to infer the poor woman's inferiority but with a sympathy that bore for her practical fruit and relief.

When Mrs. Smart had emptied her purse into the policeman's helmet, Sam, carried away by the downright fellowship of everyone in court, had attempted to express his sentiments. "He's talking," said Mrs. Smart, to the apprehension of the judge, and picking him up she left the court, to the amusement of the jury.

A touch of light relief was thus given to the sadness. It seemed a little pronounced, but Sam forgave the good old soul and the jury for that: he had had experience of the fusion of human emotions

and knew it for their *sorrow,* inhibited by the decorous atmosphere of the court, now bursting its bounds and pouring forth transformed into gaiety.

From a recent experience he knew how true is this petulance of the gayer emotion.

On one occasion, when he had been lying on the linoleum in Mr. Swift's room listening to a beggar singing in the street, Mrs. Smart came in, and said, " Enough to make a cat laugh," opened the window and threw out twopence.

The remark was singular because he was on the point of laughing himself, but what she said had effect in preventing him. " Something uncanny about her," he mused — " she seems to know one's every thought."

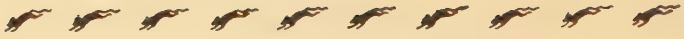
THE BEGGAR

" Oh if I 'ad a shillin'
I'd ern a 'onist livin'.
Buy a wee 'ouse fer two
An' bilin' pot an' stew.

. . . . . .

But I'm art o' werk
An' I pawned me shirt.
Me bad luck's knack —
A nut ter crack —
A's let me darn a-g-i-nn

"IF I'AD A SHILLIN"



He had stood up at the window and peered under the blind. The beggar sang sentimentally, to the mournful discord of an instrument, of the hardships of poverty and the ' down and out.' Monotonous tones of self pity were so droned that Sam could not help feeling that the beggar enjoyed his misfortune.

A small spider had crawled in the corner of the window pane and Sam had instinctively put his foot upon it and crushed it. He had then perceived another spider and a captive fly in a freshly spun web. The two spiders had been fighting over the possession of the fly and the fly struggled in its stupor from the fatal bite. The fly had not appeared to enjoy his misfortune, as the beggar in the street did.

Sam had soliloquized. " Here is an example of the profligate waste and ruthless cruelty of nature; a contrast to the eloquent advice of civilization. The spider, properly civilized, would live by the partial usurpation of his victim; and the fly, born to freedom and joy, would find it in his own misfortune as the beggar did — once the fear of death without hope was removed for him as it was for the beggar.

" The buzz of the fly has not the same sentimental cadence of resignation as the voice of the poor singer. It is the death cry. A shrill voice of revolt

at the cruelty of fate — inspired by Fear, the barbarian.

" The trial completes my conversion to a belief in civilisation and convinces me of its economy. Things remain virtually the same; it is one's attitude towards them that changes.

" Today it is fashionable to consider the world spherical. ' Flat as a plate ' was the old conception. Both of these concepts are different to the cats' notion which — unfortunately I do not remember. Really, the state of the mind is the only thing that modifies. The world is too old and sedate to keep in fashion.

" There are many ' flat as a plate ' apostles even today. I have heard them speak at Marble Arch,

London's platform of free speech. They were laughed at and ridiculed. There were arguments, but argument was life to them. *Their* emancipation came when civilisation removed the fear of death that had been upon heretics since the middle ages."

On the occasion referred to at Marble Arch, argument itself fought for life; not for immaterial differences nor for common sense masquerading as truth, for although Common Sense was there in person and offered his views he was ignominiously ignored.

On The Occasion Referred To, At Marble Arch

ROUND HEAD

from a soap box

The world is round I know,
For every mile or so
Scenes rise *up* before me
And *down* behind me go.

FLAT HEAD

jostling

If the sphere to prove to you,
Scenes do as you say they do —
And do not do so for me —
Then truth must be but for you.

COMMON SENSE

in a whisper

Why don't you both forget yourselves
And see that 'rising up'
Necessitates your being *down,*
As 'going down' must need,
At first, your being *up:*

That different all men see —
Are leagues apart — yet can agree
On common relativity,
And, if not up or down *all* be
Eye to eye they'll never see?

Mr. Einstein deftly drew
What Herr Shakespeare always knew:
'When passing in a train
'Another passing us,
'From the carriage window,
'There is just twice the fuss.

'On trains the way we go
'Our observation show:
'The speed — in spite of guide —
'Is the difference in two:
'Does to the Swift accrue.'

"It was obvious from the hush which followed that Common Sense had been heard to speak, but

being unwilling to be known at Marble Arch, and of a shy disposition, he did not reveal himself and consequently his words had no effect."

Sam had the uncomfortable presentiment that he had forgotten something and was unable to recollect what it was. He wondered when the next meeting of the Independents would take place. His experience had been enough to put a few more touches to the favourable picture of civilization he had promised the League. The words of Tabby came back to him; "you'll know" he had said. Sam had not enquired how, but surely this was it — the Independents were to meet that evening. He ran to tell Nancy.

In the evening Nancy told Mrs. Smart that Sam and she were going for a walk, and set off with him in her arms. Sam directed her the way as they went along.

Nancy met a girl friend in the street and they walked along together. Sam me-owed a direction to Nancy and her friend said, "What intelligent animals cats are!" "Yes," said Nancy, following Sam's direction. "I turn to the right here." "Goodbye," said her friend, departing.

"She doesn't understand?" Sam enquired, when

Nancy's friend had gone. " No," replied Nancy, " she is a . . . " and checked herself in time. " It is extraordinary — I cannot understand it — how some people can believe in our intelligence when they don't even know us," remarked Sam. " When a man bases his dog's intelligence on its tricks it is an excusable and quite human error he makes. But that friend of yours reminds me of Mrs. Smart."

" Through the gate to the back garden," said Sam, when they arrived at an empty house. When Sam saw the meeting present he was secretly delighted at the correct interpretation of his presentiment.

As Sam and Nancy entered the garden the half persian was talking about a new mouse trap, and their arrival was unmarked by the deference shown to Sam on his first visit. He took Nancy to a place in the circle beside Tabby.

The half persian concluded his statements about the mouse trap that had been introduced in his house to the prejudice of his favour, saying that he had proved the thing worthless by learning to take the mice out of it. Now, he said, he sat by it and prevented them going in. " That's just what strikers' pickets do," exclaimed Nancy; though she said it to no purpose for no one noticed it.

When the half persian had finished Sam stood up and turning to him said, " Let me introduce Miss

Nancy Swift — she says that strikers' pickets do as you do." Receiving no response to his remark Sam proceeded to add another touch to the second picture.

" I have much to say in favour of civilization since I had the privilege of speaking before you last. Civilization is a progressive or evolutionary system. That is to say, it has no fixed or immovable principles as the independent *I* have. Things are tried out for lurking possibilities, and all errors are good faults for they are mere unforeseen failures in the hands of disciples searching for truth."

Taking account of the apathy toward him that showed a striking contrast to the enthusiasm at the last meeting, Sam assumed great responsibility and went on:

" I have observed much in the capacity — of may I say the Independents' delegate — that circumstances have placed me, and waited patiently for the call to our next meeting. When I received your notice this morning in the form of a presentiment, I *knew* the hidden forces controlling the destiny of our race were calling us together — for you to hear what I have seen and heard."

" What does the member mean by his ' call to the next meeting ' — when we have met *every* evening since his last attendance? " demanded boisterously

an angora. " Yes," asked another, " — Is he trying to mystify us with spiritualism? "

Sam was taken at a disadvantage by these questions. They had for him a disconcerting resemblance to the ideas — real or imaginary — of Mrs. Smart and the friend of Nancy they met on the way there.

Dexterously, the potential orator sought to submit and control his audience by taking up another line. But in this too he was destined to discouragement. " Without supporters one could not form, much less successfully run, a government," he thought. " What the Independents needed most was a team well trained to tackle, decoy, pass, aid and abet — easy enough to professional footballers, who were above reproach, and a corrupt administration alike. How was *he* to make his people see that the interests of others were their interests also? He was quite prepared if it were possible to introduce corruption to serve this purpose. It could be purged out afterwards. Had he not told them that errors were good faults when they were made in pursuit of truth? The obstacle of course was a visible interest in it for the individual. What would happen if he failed to materialize an interest in it for them?"

Everything today was working against him, and he was seized with a vertigo as a debutante before

the footlights. The more tenaciously he wrestled with the situation the more trivial it became; almost amusing.

The meeting disappeared — — he was alone on a moor, until:

He saw two funny little men fighting. At first he thought they were one person with a double complement of arms and legs. They rolled over and over, going fast uphill. But coming down hill, where there was a natural inclination to increase their speed, they hardly moved at all. "That's funny," said Sam to himself in a very matter of fact voice — for he considered he knew human nature sufficiently to be surprised at nothing whatsoever. "The stubborn one is evidently winning — if it is two people — or they would come down that

slope very fast." He had no sooner said it when the one underneath who prevented the slide down hill was lifted bodily into the air by the other; and yet they did not slide.

" Ha, I was wrong! He is the more obstinate of the two," said Sam aloud. And the moment it was said they slid to the bottom of the hill and set to fighting at Sam's feet.

" Why do you fight so? " asked Sam. The combatants started at his voice and it was evident they had not been aware of his presence. They said, speaking together but for one voice always slightly behind the other, " We are not fighting, we are trying to agree," and set to more violently than before. Sam purred loudly. They were very startled to hear more noise than they were making themselves.

" What are you trying to agree about? " asked Sam. " WHO SAID IT FIRST! " they replied. " Then why don't you both say it together? " asked Sam. " That requires the agreement we can't arrive at, silly," said the pair, rather rudely. " If we could do that we would have no need to speak at all." " But you do seem to agree, however," said Sam, determined to get at the bottom of the mystery, " you both say the same thing." " Upon my soul," said they, " whatever has that to do with it? We said we couldn't agree or we would have no

need to speak at all. Now as one of us must speak first, what would be the good of his saying something the other could not understand — would it lead to agreement? If you think it would we are quite willing to try it, for we no longer look to anyone sensible to help us."

Sam could see — when he thought about it for a moment — that agreement needed equal understanding and that he was making futile suggestions. Yet at the same time it seemed so natural to have said what he did. He could see also that no matter how right he was, it was not likely that they ever would agree with him, and he said so. " Of course not," they replied sweetly, " how can you expect it, since we have been born together trying to come to a common understanding? We may say you are the first to take us for two; we are usually taken for one." Sam started off in offence and heard as he left, " — we might add that WE TELL THAT TO EVERY ONE WE SEE."

Sam hurried away and clambered up the hill to test it for himself. Reaching the top, he was surprised to find himself on Nancy's shoulder.

" I don't remember being here last," said Sam. " Oh," said Nancy, " I thought you were asleep. You work too hard at the old League, Sam. You'll have a nervous breakdown."

" How is it we are walking down the street? " enquired Sam. " I will tell you," Nancy replied:

" When you came over pale at the meeting I took you into my lap. There were heated arguments about my presence. The opinion of many members — that my understanding of the cat tongue is mythical was angrily contested by Tabby, for which service to you he received oblique accusations of disaffection in the League.

" But Tabby stubbornly maintained that every consideration should be shown for your condition which had been brought on by the unselfish pursuit of your duty to the race. A satisfactory test of my understanding could be arranged, he declared, when you felt better and were able to act as interpreter.

" The idea of my understanding, it was con-

tended by the majority, must be considered as super normal, and, as such, could only be accepted by them without conditions whatsoever. They submitted: *a*. There is a sympathy between us that is very unusual. *b*. That it is essentially *sub* and not *super* normal. *c*. Only by examination, conducted under test conditions — to eliminate all means of communication between us — could they be convinced of our common understanding.

" That you and I are no longer true to our types they were prepared to admit — since the unnatural exchange of sympathies between two intended by nature to be enemies could lead to nothing but degeneration.

" This was manifest, they declared, in the failure of your instinct to realize that a meeting had been held every evening since your first attendance. They had waited for your reappearance, at a time when their belief in you made them impatient, they said. And you did not come until you had a presentiment. They resolved against your notions and the human system.

" The voice of the assembly in bitterness rejected the Human System as inferior for ultimate emancipation. It said: ' The civilized human is prodigally *extensive* to surrounding influences. Though he gains a temporary ascendancy over his savage brothers, his race is superficially extended at the

expense of the natural *intensity* nature imparted to him with her favour, but which in squandering, he refuses as the gift of ultimate survival! "

The partiality of the League's finding against him, made in their superstitious belief in the infallibility of race instinct, and concluded without him being allowed to state his case, militated against Sam's sense of justice.

Nancy, back at the Villa, put Sam down to search for her key; while Sam, thinking on the exemplary spirit of fairness and generosity shown to the poor woman who stole a loaf of bread, turned on the step and sped back to the Independent League.

Judging from the social levity of the meeting when Sam arrived back, the business, to everyone's satisfaction, had come to an end. Pretty ' how do you do's ' and family intrigues were being played in the earliest tradition of the race, with tireless disregard of change and fashion.

He met Tabby on the outskirts of a fashionless fashionable crowd. " You back," asked Tabby, " how do you feel? "

Sam looked at him for the merest sign of allegiance. Seeing him unchanged, he took him on one side and said: " Tabby, I have been ill . . . you will understand. I have received an insight: *The truth is denied to all but the inspired, and it is so hidden between THEM that the most they are able*

to realize is its presence. I know *you* know of the understanding between Nancy and myself. Tell me then, friend, how I am to explain it to the bulk of the League? A *cat* may be capable of believing in something he doesn't understand — but will he be capable of putting it before something he thinks he does? *That man can do so,* is a doubtful point I would like to take up with you another time."

"You must try to convince them and I will do all I can to help you," said Tabby. "You know the League has renounced human wisdom?" "Yes, I have head it," replied Sam; and he commenced a loud me-ow in a well known nocturnal strain. So impelling, robust, and well pronounced was Sam's racial call to council, that it exempted doubt in the mind of the League about the purity of its author's instinct — at least for the time being.

Social courtesies were stayed and the cats rallied to his cry. They were mostly unaware of Sam's presence. "Members," said Sam, "Such social pleasures as I am unfortunate to interrupt, are only for those who are independent of injustice! I demand that the decision you made in my absence against human reason be rescinded, or judgment deferred, until I have a fair opportunity to acquit myself of the charge of having a degenerate instinct.

" Further, I would like you to answer me here and now. If you consider — as you may rightly do — that your instinct is the preserver of your race, why should it suffer you to listen to complaints about mousetraps, which according to your belief are the product of degenerate reason? "

After a pause during which no one offered to speak, Sam reiterated: " I challenge you to answer this lie to your belief and conduct! "

Tabby said dramatically, " I, member, return to you a challenge to show us our inconsistency! " and his words had the approval of silence from everyone.

Sam replied: " In the Garden of Ideas God created Instinct. Instinct complained to God of his loneliness, and God, in his compassion, took a bone from the side of Instinct and created Belief, to be a companion to him in eternal happiness. Belief ate fruit of the forbidden tree Paradox and bore to Instinct a son, Reason. Reason grew up to be a scientist.

" Scientific man revolted against the belief in his humble parentage, and the descendants of Reason came to have no belief. They appointed Reason a sentinel at the doorway of their dwelling, that none of the two great tribes, Faith and Hope might enter in, unless they could satisfy or elude his scrutiny."

Sam's voice changed and became more authoritative.

" And yet only the other day, in a court of human justice, I saw Reason step aside in a case that *he* could justly have punished. He gave place to Intuition, the step-brother of Instinct, to serve a justice that reason could not have satisfied. The judge referred to it as ' justice with reason ' — do you see the paradox? Man is unwittingly master of paradox and of the situation.

" Man's intuition is largely latent. It has become a profession for him to possess an active intuition. Your instinct is alert, but you do not admit the paradox — reason. With reason and instinct well poised, you would become masters and ultimate emancipation would be yours."

Grave accusations were hurtled at Sam. " Trickster, Wriggler, and Malevolent " were shouted by some while others accused him of being in the pay of the enemy. Yet there were those who listened to him with toleration, and Tabby, as good as his promise, appealed to these.

" Rather let us hear his defence against these serious charges than abuse him — so that if they be proven against him, the complaint of those in sympathy with him — that he had not a fair hearing — will not divide you."

Sam wished to avoid a fortuitous decision and pressed forward a proposal that they should delegate a deputation of impartial judges to witness justice at a human court of law.

The vote was taken upon it in the usual way: the voices of contestants made a great incoherent din which died down after a period that varied according to the diversion of opinion, leaving the voice of the majority — consisting, in this case, of the sandy cat and a tortoiseshell. By a repetition of this procedure two cats were elected by the League to attend the local county court on the following day. Sam made a rendezvous with them and left the meeting with a feeling of confidence.

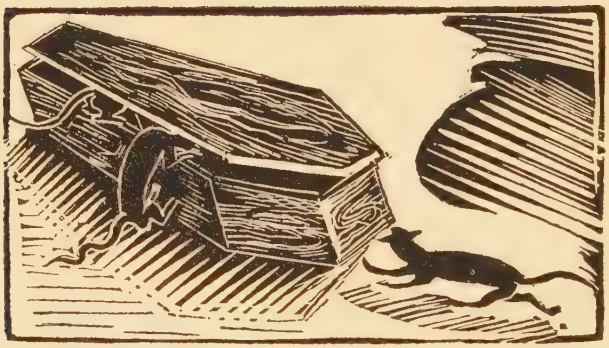
Sandy and the tortoiseshell were waiting in the front garden of the Villa at the appointed hour. Sam greeted them briefly and conducted them in silence to the court. He could have said much on the way but refrained lest it should prejudice their assumed impartiality.

They arrived before the court opened, and Sam led them into the waiting room from which exhibits were being transferred into court.

Underneath the table stood an ironbound coffin, the property of Professor Wondini, the Arabian

mystic whose performances had for years amazed his audiences in the capitals of the world.

The professor had brought an action against a Mr. Knowit for statements prejudicial to his reputation as a mystic and prophet. Sam gathered this from the conversation of the constables in attendance.



He saw that the lid of the coffin stood partly open and told the delegates to get into it. The three cats crept in unobserved and the coffin was carried into court.

Sam felt *he* was on trial for his understanding so did not translate the constables' conversation to the others; he left them to assume that that was the normal way of entering a court. After all, the difference, if any, was trivial.

The coffin was placed on a bench in the centre of the court where the three cats had a good view from its shadowy recess.

The council, clerks, jurymen, constables, sergeant, usher, and lastly the judge, filed in and took their places and the court proceedings opened. Sam sat between the two delegates.

The judge began with the trial of a street beggar.

Sam had some misgivings when he realised that the judge was not *he* who had presided at the trial of the poor woman; though he looked the same in every detail of appearance.

JUDGE

Read the charge Sergeant.

SERGEANT

Feloniously begging.

THE ACCUSED

I was only singing the old song—
The old song that nature taught the bee.

JUDGE

Insane?

Sam's misgivings increased.

THE ACCUSED

I mean the old, old song
My mother taught to me.

CONSTABLE

He sang a sad song m'lord.

JUDGE

What did he sing?

CONSTABLE

For a penny he sang:
'Thank you, thank you.
A dozen at home
And never a shoe.
When it is cold
Their feet are blue!'

JUDGE

Ha — hum

CONSTABLE

For a shilling he sang:
'Thank you an' bless you
Ladies and Sirs,

May you see no trouble,
Or moth in your furs.'

. . . . . .

For a note he sang:

JUDGE

I get the gist of it —
Call in the witnesses.

A DISRESPECTFUL VOICE

There are no witnesses m'lord:
Those who give not never saw him.
Those who did deny it for him.

JUDGE

A conspiracy — ?

Something strange happens in court: the dust leaves the benches and settles on the ceiling. The witness box collapses and a group of people is revealed.

PAVA LOVER

The swan only sings —
I can ever see.

BUSINESS MAN

If he sang a bee song m'lord
How can it be a good song
For a busy man like me?

POET

Friends, he sang in *love:* Song,
Love, and Living — the holy trinity.

PHILOSOPHER

His hire he earned by singing,
And if you call him *beggar*
Beggar you must call the bee.

URCHIN

As he rattled a can, he sang:
'The Lord's will be done,'
M'lord, '— look after number one.'

SCHOOLMASTER

Song is a bad example:
The rhyme the rule should free.
How can you make a dogma
End up with da de de?

KEEPER OF ZOO

Your theory I would here dispute:
For the owl calls me with his hoot,
But the crocodile's thanks are mute.

LICENSED VICTUALLER

Now the song worth singing—
With a tankard swinging. . . .

PROPHET

I early rise, go late to bed,
Trusting heaven for my bread.
If the faith is badly lead
We'll find the holy baker dead.

BISHOP

Songs of venal things are,
In heaven's eyes, grave sins.

REFORMER

through a hole in the ceiling

A song of joy will be —
When aside such as ye
Shall lay your axe to grind
And gladness in another find.

Sam looked at the witnesses, they were all smiling:

the business man fawned;
Pava Lover rippled;
the poet grinned;
the philosopher sniggered;
the urchin smirked;
the schoolmaster chortled;
the Zoo keeper giggled;

the licensed vitualler chuckled;
the prophet tittered;
and the bishop beamed.

Sam's glance turned towards the hole in the ceiling and beheld an expression of extreme gravity upon the face of the reformer.

" Gentlemen," said the judge to the jury, " The life of indolence and lack of principle of our beggars and mendicants is often the first rung in the ladder of crime and violence. The class to which the accused belongs is a constant menace to the law abiding citizens of society. There is nothing in the evidence to recommend him."

Sam looked hopelessly at the jury and found them to be the people who had given evidence in the tumble down witness box; having changed their position in court.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty and the judge passed the maximum sentence, and added in conclusion, " I hope you will lead a better life when you come out."

The second case before the court was that of a knife grinder, charged with causing an obstruction in a public thoroughfare. The judge asked him what he had to say for himself.

ANGELO SANTILIANI

'Tis my trade m'lord to grinda knives.

JUDGE

What knives do you grind?

ANGELO SANTILIANI

I grinda people's knives that no have too mucha time.

Caressingly he wipes the wheel of his machine to demonstrate

JUDGE

No time for what?

ANGELO SANTILIANI

A man grinda hisa axe — no have mucha time to grinda knives — and I grinda hisa knives.

JUDGE

What! do you mean to say you go about grinding knives in public — and other peoples', too!

ANGELO SANTILIANI

Takes a knife from his blouse, draws it across his thumb to show its bluntness, sets his wheel spinning with a deft swing of his arm, and pedalling with one

foot in less than a minute puts a sharp edge upon the blade to the shrill note of the spinning wheel

Ecco!

JUDGE

Whose knife is that you are grinding?

ANGELO SANTILIANI

'Tis Giovanni Bambino's, m'lorda.

JUDGE

You have the contempt for a court of justice to grind another's knife in it!

to the jury

Axe grinding must be done in a seemly manner in accordance with the demands of public susceptibilities. To do it blatantly is as offensive to the public's sense of decency as sun bathing in the park, and I regret the law makes no provision for the suppression of the former as it does for the latter. On the count of 'obstruction,' I impose the maximum fine with imprisonment in default — this sort of thing must be put down.

The coffin in which he sat between the two delegates became a tomb to Sam's hopes.

The judge who tried the poor woman for stealing a loaf of bread had permitted an escape of imagination — a gesture of idealism. Here, before him, was the real economic application of law. It was no more reasonable to expect the total suppression of crime from the lawbird than it was to expect the total destruction of ants by the ardvark; the total consumption of seaweed by the walrus; extermination of mice by the cat, or flies by the spider.

Lawbirds, walrus, ardvarks, cats and spiders, though they might not be able to fall in with any of the views of crime, seaweed, ants, mice and flies, would, he was certain, find common agreement with them upon that point.

He saw the error of his hasty conclusion — had he been an idealist? He could not answer that himself but he meant to have it out with someone responsible for his misguidance.

Professor Wondini's case was before the court and the professor came forward to display the coffin. Speaking sententiously, he declared it to be an empty elm box.

Sam foresaw possible difficulties and warned the delegates to make their escape at a signal he gave when the professor opened the lid.

Between the astonished professor's legs Sam made his escape. He gave no thought to the other two. Once outside the court he walked home disconsolately. Much reflection pressed upon his mind for consideration but he would not permit it to intrude upon the simple pleasure of being alive in spite of life's disappointments. The feeling that by such a fiasco he had gained something was elusive, because he could not imagine what that something was.

In this frame of mind he reached the Villa, resolved to be a domestic ornament for a few days without further seeking to justify unimpaired existence.

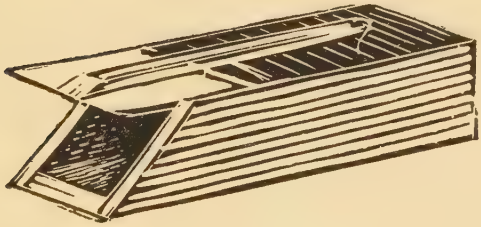
He told Nancy about it and she was sympathetic, as women always were. Nancy was fond of him. He had always taken her sympathy for granted. He did not know why — perhaps because of the way in which her affection was given. It had no permanent consolation for him in failure and he wondered if she could mean it.

A week passed and he remained at the Villa without concerning himself about the League. Nancy and he had interesting conversations. She took him to museums, exhibitions, and once to the theatre.

One evening when Nancy left him alone he heard Tabby's voice in the front garden. Sam ran out

and Tabby was pleased to see him. "We must not be seen together," said Tabby. Sam longed to know what had brought him and asked him in to the house.

Mrs. Smart said, when she saw Sam and his tabby friend come in at the kitchen door, that he was Bobby returned; but afterwards she decided he was not Bobby although just like him. Sam took him to Mr. Swift's room and demanded the news.



CHAPTER SEVEN

THIS IDEALISM

Tabby told Sam that the outlook in the League was bad as far as reform was concerned. When Sandy and the tortoiseshell gave their account of human justice, he said, a stormy meeting was held — the result of which was a complete rejection of the human system.

As the delegates narrated it, the same people sat upon the jury benches and gave evidence in the witness box. Although no two of them could agree, and though they brought down the witness box in sheer diversity of opinion, they walked over to the jury benches and returned an unanimous verdict of ' guilty ' upon the prisoner!

Sam ceded that the two cases were unfavourable, but denied collusion that was suggested by the delegates. Since the occasion, he said, it became clear to him that the purpose of justice is not the eradication of crime but its protection.

Crime and justice exist for their mutual well-being. Of the walrus, ardvark, cat, and spider, no *one* would agree that another's diet was the most enviable. But should they, sitting upon a jury, vote the suppression of flies what interest could they expect from the spider in the preservation of seaweed, ants and mice?

When she came in, Nancy was pleased to see Sam with a visitor, and she put on the gramophone for their entertainment. Tabby recognized Sam's voice at the end of one of Nancy's home-made records.

By Sam's aid as interpreter, Tabby had a long and interesting talk with Nancy. It did not occur to *him* to suspect that Sam might counterfeit Nancy's part in the conversation. He was a thoroughly right-minded cat who would have been ashamed of such suspicions. For him, suspicion was only justifiable where absolute proof might be obtainable. Where there was no possible way in which it could be confirmed he regarded suspicion as a hostile spirit, equivalent to an inferiority complex and destructive to the individual. Before he left, he

thanked Nancy for the nice time he had had and said he would like sometime to learn human speech.

There is no doubt he would have been easily able to do so, for he had indirectly realised that, as one could never be sure of the meaning of people one understood, conversation almost amounted to a monologue anyway. Tabby claimed no intelligence for the rare aptitude he possessed — that would have appeared snobbish. He considered a premium had been placed upon intelligence by those who had a capacity rather than an aptitude. At the same time, Tabby could not have been called modest; he was the reverse. We call a retiring plant that grows in the wood modest, but the plants it stifles in its modest existence would not call it so.

"There's to be a great muster of the fraternity to celebrate the superiority of our race," said Tabby. "When?" enquired Sam. "The date is not fixed," said Tabby, "— but you'll know." "I must attend," said Sam. "I would advise you to keep away for a while," recommended Tabby.

Sam, however, was determined to go. He might not be able to make his opportunities, in the face of such overwhelming opposition, but he could take them. He needed them badly enough.

One morning I was sitting alone in my study, unable to make much headway with my work, when the telephone bell rang impetuously. I could not imagine who it might be, as I had come up from Nanjulian unexpectedly and none of my friends knew I was in town. Taking up the receiver I heard a voice enquire, " Are you the author? " and I recognized its owner as the Siamese Cat.

He obtained my number from Nancy, a regular caller, and rang me up by twisting the dial of the new system. I replied, " Yes — it's me Sam — but I am afraid I'm awfully busy — " My impatience with callers on the telephone is in inverse ratio to the degree of our relationship. Sam cut me short curtly.

SAM

Why did you get me into a fix with this idealism — to discover that nothing is economic unless it is permanent?

I

Because I have found it so in my experience.

SAM

Couldn't you write outside your experience?

I

Of course I could.

aside

I confess the lie.

SAM

Then why don't you? — You'll never be able to get me out of a mess like this; and besides, you ought to consider if all my suffering makes it worth while.

I

with a pose

There is the experience of the general public to consider first of all.

SAM

You despise the general public?

I

No, I cannot do that — I am the general public.

SAM

I don't understand.

I

The general public is to me what I see in it — there may be a whole lot more in it, but how am I to know about it?

SAM

And what are *you* to the general public?

I

about to put down the instrument

Every one has his own general public; *you* are what I am to *my* general public.

SAM

Isn't it a rapacious form of cannibalism to absorb my identity in representing YOU to yourself?

I

Maybe; but it's quite fairly balanced. The general public absorbs my identity in you, to represent IT to itself.

SAM

impatiently

Please look here; I was warned you would make excuses, but I must come to a clear understanding now — or you may regret it.

I

You threaten me!

SAM

Not threaten — warn you.

I

You, Sam, are an idea, and individually cannot absorb *sane* people; you may absorb other ideas. Practically speaking, you are an epicure.

SAM

But about this secret meeting of The Cats Independent League — I must know what goes on at it if I am to pull through.

I

sparing his feelings as much as possible

I doubt if you will pull through.

SAM

cunningly

— I am very curious.

I

I could not help being amused

Ha, ha! — I promise you the outing.

SAM

I wish your experience had been different. I oughtn't to be limited by you like this. I should get along more

and accomplish things; more like life where reformers rise and succeed. Look at Lincoln and Cromwell!

I

That's all right, Sam, for *life,* but this isn't life. You'd have to reform people to *succeed* in life; and when you'd reformed every one you'd cease to be a reformer. In life such anomalies are consistent — nay, necessary, but here it is more reasonable. The more success you have the greater reformer you become. Who, in Life, do you think, will have the slightest interest in your success as a reformer, when there are such numbers of *real* successes dusty and neglected upon their bookshelves? If you were real you would supply the *object* of reform to the ambition of some rising aspirant the moment you turned middle age, if not before.

Hamlet is older than Bunyan, Wesley, and Whitfield, though no one would think it.

In Life, the success of a reformer is fuel to the flame of reform. In Limbo we have not the hereditary disposition of inquisitors.

In Life, one succeeds to become a prey to one's successors: that is why the potential successor applauds; and that is why it is decorous for him to disdain success. In Limbo, the most impracticable things are possible; like *thinking,* and *development by success.*

You are elected a warden to guard the Elysian escape

for life's deluded heroes, where some poor jades and dudes who have been tormented by the defeat of recognised success, may live over again, but now with the thrills of success in total unrecognition.

Do you imagine the marvels of surgical hope have any appeal for the fit and sound? Or the joy of forsaking sin for the moral? Why, a young ambitious moralist today would, of necessity, be compelled to become unmoral or close down if our present moralists should ever be so completely unsuccessful as to purify the whole world.

The possibility of such a thing in *life* is not lurking in the noddles of *my* general public. In Limbo, it is your elected privilege to sustain it.

Sam put up the telephone and went to look for Nancy. He found her in the breakfast room. "I've a plan for your diversion Sam," she said, seeing him look worried; "you must not take the affair too seriously." "I don't need diverting at the moment," replied Sam; "I have just talked to the author."

"Oh! how does it end?" enquired Nancy. "I don't know," said Sam, "but he put an entirely new aspect on it, and henceforth I am quite indifferent to the *ultimate* success of reform in the League. Our ambitions are quite different. It seems that while the League and I are mutually serviceable to one another, *I* am relieved of the necessity to succeed. How many people would refrain from giving up discouraging jobs if they knew success was of little use to them?

"But, Nancy, I need your assistance; for now that I know it is unimportant — that is to say, that the League cannot ruin my ambition by yielding — I must positively endeavour to reform it.

"The League is giving a party at the Crystal Palace to celebrate the superiority of the race, and it is my intention to be present, incognito."

"Disguised!" exclaimed Nancy. "Yes," said Sam, "Now that I have interviewed the author, and know my fate more or less, all is fair . . . I have lost my illusions." "Perhaps you have merely

taken on others, Sam," suggested Nancy. "Well, perhaps," said Sam. "— No doubt something happens when one gets off the rocks and lives to talk about it; he doesn't evaporate, you know. Possibly I've buried my head in the sand like the ostrich — anyway I've no fixed *eyedears*. The process of life is a register of the spirit and needs its constant reference.

"I am just as keen about the reform of the Independent League. Perversely, it seems more possible now than ever; but without responsibility in it. No one is to blame if it goes wrong and no one to take the credit if it goes right— the one implies the other. It won't go right. I've practically had a guarantee.

"Just imagine one possessed of the insatiable spirit of reform, having attained his objective! It has always puzzled me — but now it does more and more. Can the scheme of things be so unjust as to permit the confirmed reformer to live with nothing to reform? — no, never. In the absolute sense, the only success of the reformer is failure."

Nancy turned out a large box of oddments and tried to think of a disguise for Sam that would arouse no suspicion. On the top of the pile stood an old discarded fur of Mrs. Smart's. "What is this?" asked Sam. "Mock skunk" replied Nancy. "Never heard of the animal," said Sam; "or is

it a vegetable?" "No," said Nancy, "it's the skin of one animal got up to resemble that of another more fashionable." "A very retiring disposition the original must have," Sam suggested. "Yes," Nancy agreed; "— probably a rabbit."

Sam sniffed over the fur in question and stated quite positively in contradiction: "It is a Persian cat." "Why, that's just the thing, Sam," said Nancy; "you must disguise as a Persian."

A few animals, such as a rabbit and a fox cub, were discussed, but as these had certain disadvantages, the cat nature being what it is; the persian disguise was finally decided upon.

At Sam's suggestion, Nancy cut the fur into strips. She sewed one of them on to a narrow elastic band and put it round Sam's head. The result was at once startling and encouraging. Nancy, taking his measure, set about making a series of furry bands to accommodate every inch of his body. The elastic bands were first made and tried on. The fur was then sewn on to the bands.

The work took a long time to do in the evenings, and Sam, who had given the enterprise a good deal of thought and consideration, became less pleased with the idea as the work progressed.

Tabby paid Sam regular visits. He walked in one day and Mrs. Smart exclaimed "Why, here's Bobby!" in her customary manner — in fact, she

said it of almost every tabby cat she encountered. In the chat that followed between Sam and Tabby, Sam asked Tabby about Bobby's career in the League.

He learned that Bobby had been a well loved member, whose loss had been universally regretted. Tabby said, " We hope that he will one day come back. It is supposed that, suffering from a temporary loss of instinct, he wandered away from the district and was unable to find his way home. The suggestion abroad, that he died of grief, is of course a human fabrication. It is thought in the League to have been invented by humans to establish, for the cat, the allegiance of servitude so fitly accredited to the dog."

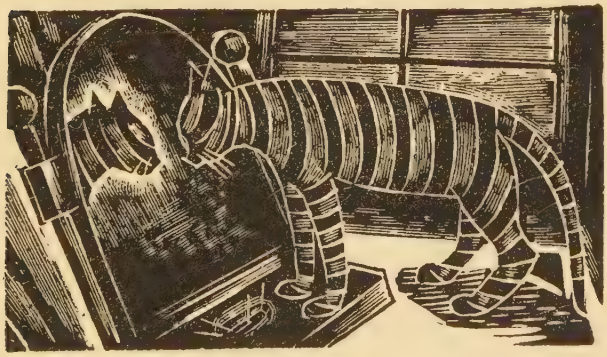
Sam, who had been considering that the impersonation of Bobby at the Crystal Palace party would be better than the Persian idea, said nothing of his enterprise to Tabby. He contented himself with enquiries about Bobby's traits that he thought might be useful to him in the modification of his project.

" How goes the cause? " enquired Sam. " Impossible, until this celebration craze is over," said Tabby. " Of course you know the rank and file don't care one way or another. It is intended by the leading spirits to work up a little popular feeling." And that was all that was said about it.

Tabby stayed on and chatted a little, talked to Nancy, and then left.

Sam nursed the new idea of disguising as Bobby; but the nearer Nancy came to the completion of his Persian costume, the more difficult he found it to broach the subject to her.

One day, he heard from Tabby that the party was to take place on the morrow. At the first try-on of his Persian guise, Nancy slipped the bands on hurriedly and some of them occurred inside out. The white bands of elastic interspersed with those of dark fur gave him a striking resemblance to a tabby.



" Look! " he cried, twisting stylishly before the mirror. And Nancy, looking into it, exclaimed,

"Why, you are a perfect tabby." She arranged the bands more to heighten the resemblance.

"Couldn't something be done to make it more like Bobby," asked Sam. "Why, yes," said Nancy; "Bobby was a ginger tabby: the white elastics can be dyed." "I have a special reason for looking as much like Bobby as possible," said Sam, seeing Nancy's interest. "Then you must be clipped and dyed," said Nancy; "— or rather, dyed and bleached."

She put on all the bands of fur and went to fetch Mr. Swift's clippers. Carefully combing them out, she clipped them close as the coat of a tabby, and said, "Now I will bleach the alternate bands."

This she did, and the brown of the mock skunk faded to a yellow. The remainder of the bands she dyed black. The result when he tried them on she declared to be wonderful; and all he wanted, to be Bobby's double, was a little face make-up of burnt cork.

She hastened to make up his face and then took him to the kitchen. Mrs. Smart went into ecstasies of delight. When Nancy disclosed the sham to the good old soul, Mrs. Smart was extremely disappointed but said, good humoredly, "I've never been so took in, in all my life."

On the evening of the party Nancy bade Sam, who was dressed in his shining armour, bonne chance, and he set off. In the front garden he ran into the original Bobby of whom he was the counterfeit. For a moment he had the illusion of standing before a mirror. It was Bobby returned! What was he to do?

He conceived a plan, and enquired; " Pardon me, but are you visiting at the Villa? " " Yes," said his original; " — have you come from it? " " I have," answered Sam; " they are going to bed and the house is locked." " What is your business, friend? " asked Bobby. " I am looking for a Siamee — a reformer." replied Bobby's double. " I know the fellow and am looking for him myself. I have heard he is gone to the Independent League's party at the Palace tonight," said Sam; and suggested, " suppose we join forces — two heads are better than one."

The lucky wisdom of this last hazard was of just the right calibre to put him au fait with the simple Bobby, and they set off together towards the Crystal Palace.

Knowing his rôle, from his peep behind the scenes with the author, Sam was not to be discouraged by failure. It was to be his salvation; only it had to be averted as long as possible. To a reformer, success is ruin and premature failure

is incompetence. His maxims became: *Don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg,* and *All means are good that do not lead to ultimate success or premature failure.*

Life was only tolerable to him as a process, and anything destructive of the process was wrong. The prolongation of the *process,* for the allotted span, in robust health meant victory. Without qualms of guilt he applied himself conscientiously to his problem, with the best feelings in the world towards Bobby.

" Do you know the Villa? " asked Sam of his double. " — lived there for five years," the double replied. " Then you are Bobby! " declared Sam, " I am pleased to meet you. I've heard so much of your virtues from Mrs. Smart, who believes you went away to die of grief."

" Not a bit of it," declared Bobby indignantly, " — I left on the death of my old mistress, who was a reasonable woman, to escape in Mrs. Smart the mistaken kindness that is so destructive to one's independence." " And are you returning? " enquired Sam. Bobby replied: " I am making enquiries about the Siamee, on behalf of the League. I am now living in these parts again as the air did not agree with me at Tooting. There is nothing like one's native air when one is out of sorts." " True," agreed Sam, " — cats are either

fools or physicians at our age; but that *you* are no fool is plain."

In the conversation they had on the way to the Crystal Palace, Sam learned that Bobby had returned to live at the Hollies, being appointed by the League to watch his movements at the Villa; for which Sam bore no ill will towards him. 'Each to his capacity,' was well enough — how else could it be?

By the light in the sky from the firework display, faintly silhouetting the towers of the Crystal Palace, the two cats became aware of their approach to the party. They made their way through a fencing and crossed the grounds laid out with lawns, paths and shrubs.

The whole was littered with a familiar shroud of fête: pieces of torn newspaper and the wrappings of chocolates, bonbons, caramels and toffies; tram, bus and train tickets, cigarette ends and their boxes; cigar ends and bands, and matches; the dried edges of sandwiches; bones, and crumpled serviettes; broken cups, glasses, ginger beer, and other bottles; and here and there broken whatnot flasks; paper streamers, confetti, toothpicks, and the skins of bursted balloons, and shabby peacocks' feathers; crumpled umbrellas, odd gloves, hat trimmings, and strawyard casualties, ties and garters, broken rubber and celluloid balls, and

monkeys up sticks; babies' feeding bottles, teats and bibs; cocoanut shells, orange peel, banana skins, rinds of lemons and pineapples, mushed tomatoes, and eggshells, together with apple cores and cherry stones.

Halting by a small shrub of hydrangea, Sam suggested to Bobby they should take a breather while he ascertained the direction. He thought it inadvisable to approach the League in the company of Bobby, and wanted to consider what he should do.

The front of the Crystal Palace, lighted by the fireworks, lay to his right-back. Sam calculated that the League was therefore somewhere not very far to his right-front, in the centre at the back of the crowd.

He was reconciled to a campaign beset with hardships and difficulties, and, in the end, failure. According to his enlightenment, that was all right; but the hardships were none the less unpleasant.

Here by his side was the unsuspicious Bobby, seeking to betray him in the elusive hope of his own success. If success should come to Bobby, it would — with its nightmare of disappointment — discard him in his old age to find pleasure in living over again the hardships and struggles of its attainment. Therefore, Sam reasoned, it was quite right for him to deceive Bobby: it would serve them

both in the end — only Bobby would not thank him for it until then.

Perhaps he would never thank him for it. But that was up to him. Sam could not attempt to justify the deception by assuming that he, Sam, was right and that Bobby was wrong. It seemed dishonest to make assumptions of that kind, and that there were doubly sufficient reasons for breaking the convention without them.

Sam surreptitiously slipped off one of his elastic bands and, taking the unsuspecting Bobby unawares, bound and gagged him with it before he could resist. Politely, he turned to his captive and said, " The occasion does not permit me to explain what to you must seem very ungrateful behaviour on my part; but rest assured you may be thankful for it one day. There is a chance of course that you won't, but my respect for you wouldn't presume it — and, anyway, we all take chances." Sam strode away towards the party, leaving the disconsolate Bobby.

Behind the last row of spectators, Sam saw the Independents sitting with their backs towards him. Summoning his confidence he made a detour and came upon them from the front. They were thirty to forty strong.

The Half Persian was first to see him and asked: " What of the Siamee, member? " " I saw him

and spoke to him," replied Sam; " — he is a very earnest and moderate fellow." " Moderate do you call it! " several of the League exclaimed. " Indeed I do," said Sam, " — he had the greatest respect for what he called ' the moderation of the English party.' He said that so long as they were treated with fairness and consideration, a revolution in the country was impossible. It was nothing but the inflammatory talk of the hotheads. That the League was a thoroughly *rightminded* body of cats that had treated him well."

" But this is not the Siamee! — you are mistaken in your man," shouted an Angora. Sam then gave a minute description of him that allayed their doubt and augmented their astonishment. " I'm sure it was he," he said; " he talks with great deliberation and passion of his ideals, but he falters and stutters about the most matter of fact topics. He appears — I say appears, for I was convinced later to the contrary — to have the instinct of a half wit with the brain of a wizard." " It is he," the cry went round, to settle finally the doubtful point, and permit Sam to return to his purpose.

Sam continued: " I find it difficult to share your suspicions about such a fairminded and reasonable member. I am convinced of the rightness of the League in rejecting the human system; but I hope you will consider this member's suggestion for the

HOORAH-HOORAH-HOORAH-

adoption of some devices which, under the foster parentage of the humans, have developed wills and individualities of their own. I expect to address the League upon the subject at some not far distant date."

Sam scrutinized the face of every member and noted with much satisfaction the improvement he had made in the extension of his failure, thus obtaining for him another opportunity to reform them. "It must begin as soon and last as long as possible," he thought.

The Independents sat and passed unpleasant and derisive remarks about the row of humans silhouetted in front of them. Sam agreed with them once or twice, to help bear out his impersonation.

There were giant-catherine wheels, jack in boxes, roman candles, squibs, crackers, retorts, bombs, and rockets which went up with the cheers of the crowd. A portrait of Guy Fawkes was going off on a huge framework, and the wind dispersed the smoke from it over the spectators.

While rockets soared on either side and Very Lights came down from aeroplanes, a long cascade de feu poured its golden tinsel at the base of the fiery arc. The voice of the League proclaimed the conflagration of the human race, in a drawling and derisive me-ow, as the smoke hung upon the

ground partially enveloping the crowd and its members were being carried away by a cleverly foreseen illusion.

Sam went off unobserved to some bushes nearby, to strip his disguise and wash the make-up from his face.

One of the aeroplanes employed in the spectacle was seen to be in difficulties; and Sam, who was near enough, saw that it burst into flames. He saw the pilot try to right it. The crowd mistook the incident for a little reserve surprise, a part of the show, and cheered it lustily. It spun as it dived earthwards and the cheering followed its spiral curves. But their cheers rose higher as the ill-fated plane spun lower. The crash with which it fell was received with a still heartier applause from

the pleasure-sick crowd. It fell close enough to Sam for him to be unmistaken about its tragedy.

It sickened him to see a tragedy, which appearance called a jest, enacted before him and the crowd laugh at it without discernment. They were just as capable of tears before a similarly mistaken comedy. To Sam it seemed that no tragedy was so deep reaching as their dull consciousness, and no comedy so *pathetically* amusing as their naïveté.

Sam soliloquized: " Before me is a tragedy. Before the mob, is a jest; and the mob's mirth at the spectacle is interpreted by the League party as a symbol of the anguish of the burned!

" The fun (and the glum) of the fair is for those who see it. It would be sheer inhumanity to expect to point it out to those who are not organized to meet it with resignation and composure. It is humane to keep it from them — but the ambition of the HUMANITARIAN must ever be to point it out!

" Can one, therefore, ever realise an ambition? No; ambition is an active process, and if healthy refuses to be realised. To sit in a comfortable chair and joyfully be a spectator at its own funeral — impossible. Pennies to the poor, and acts of samaritanism to individuals are pleasing and trifling gestures but can never be the ideal of the humanitarian — for they are liable to succeed, and

success, I know, will ruin a humanitarian as well as any other."

The incident revealed an affront to Sam's sensibilities and it was some time before he was able to harmonise his determination with it. He ran back to the League to appear before them as the final piece, a portrait of the Prince of Wales, was being shown on the centre screen. He addressed them in his natural voice before they had time to realize who he was.

" Members," he said, " my intuition has brought me here: it urged that you would listen to the dictates of balanced judgment and that I must hasten." ' The dictates of balanced judgment,' said one of the party; " — are the words of Bobby."

Sam went on: " — It told me I was wrong in advocating the mental mechanics of the human to his superior, but it intimated: ' *Represent his physical mechanics.*' In other words, whereas you are quite right, according to your own light, in rejecting the human system as a whole — you should consider the adoption of its mechanical devices."

The lady cat who had considered Sam handsome at a previous meeting of the League, suggested, " That sounds very reasonable." Being a favourite of the younger element she soon found supporters

of her view, who asked Sam to explain his meaning to the League. Sam, who had had the matter under consideration for some time in anticipation, put forward the suggestion that the accuracy of a compass might be favourably contrasted with the uncertainty of cats' instinct. He told them of his interview with the ship's compass on the S. S. *S-ee-m;* how it had modestly declared its share in the safety of the ship; and how the credit for its unerring judgment had been claimed by the captain. " Mechanical judgment," claimed Sam, " is the only reliable kind."

Though the League listened to him with its old scepticism, with the faithful tabby's assistance he was able to get them to agree to a test of the compass.

He was in good form and spoke well. Having reached a provisional decision he was then glad to drop behind and receive the congratulations of his tabby friend.

The symbolic conflagration of the human race complete, the League now started for home — being unwilling to remain and see it survive. Social amenities succeeded as usual, and, in high spirits, the greater number of the party walked on in front, leaving Sam, Tabby, and a few stragglers behind.

A commotion appeared in the vanguard and Sam — who guessed what had happened with

that sinking fear that his anxiety might betray him at the very moment of promised victory — ran forward to ask if anyone was hurt.

In the centre of a ring of cats Bobby lay gagged and bound. Sam pushed his way through the crowd, cried for water, unslipped the elastic band from Bobby's mouth, supported his head on his arm and felt his pulse. " He is all right," said Sam, after a brief examination. Other helpers now came forward, undid his bonds and pressed him with questions.

Sam left Bobby to tell his story.

" I was left here by a stranger — a tabby," Bobby said.

" You were at the party with us not fifteen minutes ago! " cried the sandy cat. Bobby strug-

gled to his feet and exclaimed amid great astonishment, " I declare I have been lying here bound and gagged this half hour." " His mind wanders," suggested one. " After a trying experience of that kind we should not be too exacting," said an old lady cat. And so the matter was left, with the general impression on every one that his mind had been turned by the assault.

Sam told Nancy the result: he did not mention to her the means he employed to achieve it. He was sick of the undue importance that attached to means. Religious, moral, logical, sentimental, and aesthetic objections to means prevented, for some, the most desirable results being striven for — he would not say achieved; for that, to him, was *not* desirable.

That Nancy was pleased with him she showed by changing the curtains in the breakfast room and the addition of cream in his breakfast milk.

Old difficulties and drawbacks were soon forgotten in the radiance of his partial success. He almost forgot that complete success was not desirable to an earnest reformer. His plans for the test of the compass were talked over with Nancy in his former ardour. Nancy lent him a small

compass of her father's, and made for it a carriage to fit his back, much after the pattern of those used by dogs for collecting boxes in our hospitals. In fact the resemblance was so striking that when he ran out into the street to try it in action, an old lady attempted to put a penny into it. This absolutely incongruous incident in some way encouraged the reformer. It may have been because he saw a possible avenue for funds, should he ever need them.

They spent a few holiday afternoons together, and on one of them Nancy took him to a picture show — Modern French Masters and Others.

It was held in a gallery in the heart of W. C. London. The entrance was two shillings and sixpence and the catalogue half a crown.

Nancy told him that most of the high priced works were by artists who had died, some of them in poverty.

Living artists were represented by the works of Onris Malaise, Pabas le Picâne, Onsouris Demain, and Mort de Nature, of the Impressionist, Expressionist, Depressionist, and Repressionist schools. Things were carefully arranged by the Company to impress clients on entering; express a deposit for purchases; depress those who could not afford to buy all they afforded to like, by denying them the snobbish pride of possession and the promised

profits of investment; and finally repress the plunger of hasty judgment with a small notice on the reverse of the catalogue which stated that deposits were forfeited should they not be redeemed at the close of the exhibition.

In the catalogue was a foreword by Æsthetic Trombone, the art critic who recently so ably conducted the divorce suit of Mr. Modern Painting, by pointing out the grounds of incompatibility between him and his wife, formerly, Miss Place Tradition. The offspring of the union, Master Significant Form Painting, was, it will be remembered, awarded to the custody of his father. After the divorce Miss Place Tradition entered an academic convent in Piccadilly.

Sam and Nancy stood in a fashionable crowd before a canvas by Onris Malaise, of a nude on a

crumpled couch. Despite the fact that Sam could not be understood by their neighbours, Nancy felt quite embarrassed at his remark. " I suppose the crumples of the couch are significant of the troubled sea of life and the nude of the defencelessness of mankind." " Sam," said Nancy, when they came away, " — ' significant ' has no literary meaning. It is for the art of philosophy to appeal to the intellect, music to the ear, and painting to the eye. The intrinsic qualities of paint (*intrinsic qualities* was used in the foreword) are those which appeal to the eye, without overlapping the other faculties." " Eyes, ears, and intellects are useless without co-ordination at headquarters," said Sam " — to me it appears like writing books in magic ink, the words of which disappear when one tries to understand their meaning, though they must need to be all put into it just the same — but in such a way that the purity of their form is jealous of their meaning."

Refreshed by his few days holiday, Sam attended at the League meetings to make arrangements for the compass test.

On the following day two parties of cats were to set out from points equidistant to a common

goal. One party was to march by its instinct and the other by compass direction. Sam chose for the goal, the front of the Crystal Palace, as he thought it was under his lucky star. The party to march by instinct was to be led by Tabby, and the compass party by Sam.

At seven o'clock in the evening Sam met his party, composed of the sandy cat, the half persian, a grey white, a black and himself. The sign arranged for the start was the appearance of the last part of the rising moon. Sam stood with the compass on his back and directed the white cat to make a reading of the needle, so that the moment the moon should rise they could start off in the right direction. The starting point for each party had been chosen with a clear view to the horizon.

" Go! " shouted the half persian umpire; and the party ran in the direction indicated by the compass needle, stopping to consult it when, for a corner or other obstruction, they were compelled to alter their course.

When clouds covered the moon and there was some delay in reading the compass, the black cat objected that it was a disadvantage to what had at first struck them all as a very wonderful instrument. The objection was, however, well countered by Sam who said: " The latest compasses are luminous and can be read with ease on a night black enough to discourage a cat's eyesight."

It was thought that the distance to the goal could be covered in about an hour. In a quarter of an hour they made splendid progress, and met a cross runner from the instinct party who reported that it had got into difficulties when the clouds came up, and when he left was going back on its tracks. This was so inspiriting to Sam that he urged his party on, until the sky became threatening and a peal of thunder proclaimed an advancing storm.

The storm did not dismay the eager party; but developing, turned into one of the electric variety and — unknown to Sam — upset the mechanism of the compass, which thenceforth gave erroneous directions.

When they had been going for more than an

hour in this way, members of the party began to doubt the efficiency of the compass. Sam, still undiscouraged, despatched a cross runner to ascertain the whereabouts of the instinct party. Half an hour later he returned and reported that they were awaiting Sam's arrival at the Crystal Palace, and said that they, the compass party, were going in the wrong direction!

Failure again stared grimly at Sam, but he did not grumble for he had had his run of hope. He took it philosophically and called the test off. Without hope of convincing them, he told his party that chance had been against the successful demonstration of the compass. " Unaccountable flaws," he stated, " can be found in instinct too. To prove the superiority of mechanical skill, we should meet again when there is less likelihood of electrical storms to upset the compass."

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INVENTION

In his career of reform, Sam does not live to become the object of reform to his successors.

The explorers and missionaries who first visited the negroes and aboriginal savages of unknown shores, discovered they were surrounded by a hideous thicket in their traditions of superstition and folklore, and, in the plastic arts, of carvings and paintings. These literary and graphic monstrosities have today, among our most advanced thinkers, assumed quite a different aspect.

Curators of the national museums all over the civilized world are now carefully dusting the plun-

der of these early explorers, and bringing it forward on the shelves in the ethnographical galleries. In Les Galleries des Objets d'Art, in Paris, specimens that hitherto were scattered chiefly among the maritime inhabitants of the city — who looked upon them as mere curiosities of no cogent meaning or value to the occidental eye — are now much sought after as works of the profoundest artistic expression. The literature, too, has a somewhat similar history.

Ethnographists, ethnologists, and ethologists have always been interested in the study of the aboriginal. But artists, in an endeavour to escape the restricting palisade of the super refinement of tradition by returning to the aboriginal's archaic simplicity, have given the study a different twist, which, I venture to think, has stimulated an interest in the sociologic, economic, and moral perfection of a people who have been considered for so long mere barbarous savages, closer in their relationship to the anthropoid apes than to man.

In sapient man, the development of the intellect had been so rapid and diverse as to terrify some of us with doubt about its growth being beneficial to the happiness of mankind. It has appeared to those that this profligate diversity of development lacks a directional incentive; and it is for this reason, as the recent interest in primitive or in-

stinctive peoples will testify, philosophers have turned their attention in the direction of the artists — towards the neglected fields of the intuitive. So much interest has been stimulated that we may reasonably expect, not long from now, to see the word Intuitive share the popularity of Charleston, which was derived from the same origin less directly.

It may flatter our vanity sometimes to read learned expositions of the fourth and fifth dimensions, but it is a considerable drawback to the conclusion that they are developing our intellects when their champions tell us we must be gifted to follow their reasonings. It is excusable for us to wonder, indeed, whether their conclusions are for their exponents an extension of intellect, or for us a deficiency or neglect of intuition.

Sam, born an instinctive creature with the germ of intellectual development, had tried to go over the ground, in the short space of his existence, and catch up to the state in which we humans are first conscious of being readymade. He possessed the supposed advantage of no hereditary bents or inclinations, and when he returned from the failure of the compass test was free from regrets that belong to a supposition that the result might have been different had he acted differently.

He told Nancy about his failure because he re-

lied upon her to help him in the next step. Having found that his reason was antipathetic to the dictates of his instinct and that they, in so far, had abandoned him to reason he needed her help. It was impossible, for him now to return to his instinct; therefore he must seek to discover a harmony between it and his reason: by Nancy's help bring about a harmonious marriage of the two masters Instinct and Reason. While he retained more of the one, she was certainly more master of the other.

When Nancy to encourage him said, " Every cloud has a silver lining," and " The situation is never so hopeful as when it looks blackest," his imagination sought some project to materialise the optimism of her words.

Nancy told him: " A prophet, I have heard, is never appreciated in his own country. . . . Mankind, though a gregarious animal, is migratory by nature. England is now living upon the labours of the pioneers who founded its prosperity, and like a successful business man is vegetating in the quiet retirement of the country. She is found to be too conservative for the free growth of youthful ideas; so that those whose ambitions do not permit them to support restrictions on their development must, like the Pilgrim Fathers, emigrate elsewhere."

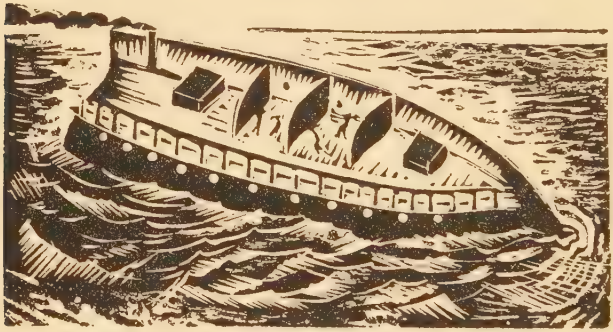
"Where did the Pilgrim Fathers emigrate to?" enquired Sam. "America," replied Nancy. "And where does the restricted talent of America emigrate to?" rejoined Sam's equiry. "Europe," replied Nancy. "Had it not been better to have stayed there in the first place?" asked Sam. "No," replied Nancy; "—for then it could not emigrate." "I see," said Sam, "emigration is the essential need of restricted impulses." "Yes," Nancy replied. "Emigrate," Sam concluded.

It was shortly after this earnest conversation that Nancy one day informed Sam that they were going to America; one day when Sam had been wondering for some time how his emigration might come about.

Mr. Swift accepted the tentative offer made by a promoter of a new boat, to navigate it across the Atlantic to New York. The promoter of the ingenious invention despaired of convincing people in the old country of a more efficient way of sailing than that to which they had been accustomed for years.

The new boat was a four masted sailing vessel having its sails below instead of above the water. They were so arranged as to make use of the tides

and currents which its inventor maintained were more powerful propelling agents than the winds. So cheap, he said, was its maintenance that he foresaw, at some future time — when the increasing population of the world would make every habitable space necessary for the support of the fit and law-



abiding citizens — the employment of his invention as a floating detention camp or prison for the incurable and criminal. In the meantime it was dedicated to the service of mankind as a more economic means of transport than that in use.

The first model he made from a converted sailing boat, ballasted to float upside down, the hatches and ports of which he rendered watertight. With the hull thus inverted, its old decks formed the keel, and alterations he made in its sailing gear adapted it better for under water wear and tear.

It achieved a steadiness hitherto unsuccessfully striven for by the engineers of turbine engines and twin screws.

An Atlantic liner with the steadiness of a Thames barge was the unrealized dream of seasick voyagers. Its inventor found the unaltered shape of the hull offered less resistance to the wind, and little alteration provided it with promenade decks above its old waterline. The keel he pierced for the insertion of skylights and hatches, and the hull, for that of portholes. For the exercise and entertainment of its passengers and crew, five courts he constructed against the keel, through which he erected a single small chimney to the galley. Its rudder of course he lowered and reversed, to enter the water in the boat's novel position. The steering gear, though left unchanged, he turned upside down. It could hardly be said — except in his presence — to be a new invention; rather, it was an old one put to a new purpose.

" When are you going? " asked Sam of Nancy. " — don't know," replied Nancy; " but it's certain *we are going*." " Have you any friends in America? " Sam enquired. " Yes," replied Nancy; " Sadie, who came to school with me in England." " Has she restricted impulses? " asked Sam. " No," said Nancy, " she is quite normal; but her parents sent her to England to acquire them." " Why? "

queried Sam; " — they are such awful drawbacks to a girl." " So that she might return to stay in America." replied Nancy.

" I would like to meet her," said Sam; " does she like cats? " " She has five, and in her own words they are her grand passion — she gets a kick out of them." " Will you write to tell her you are going to America? " asked Sam. " Yes," said Nancy, " and you shall write too." " How can I do that? " Sam enquired. " I have it! " exclaimed Nancy excitedly, " — you must write to Mamie, her favourite cat. I will make a gramophone record, and you — make a little speech in it . . . I can send it to Sadie and ask her to play it over to Mamie, and to let me know how Mamie likes it."

Sam was attracted by the idea, and would have suggested writing there and then had he known just what to say, but this required reflection. And in giving it he hit upon the extension of his purpose by an address, through Mamie, to the New York Legion of Cats. A sort of advance publicity campaign was, he had heard before, extremely useful in reducing the spade work of a new arrival, and in increasing his chances of making good there.

Now that his project was tidily arranged and only waited for time and mood to put it into execution, Sam gave himself up to the diversion of learning more about England — which Nancy told him

he would be expected to know. " Americans," she said — and she had learned this from Sadie — " know more about one's own country, no matter where one may hail from, than one does one's self. Not that there is little to know about America — quite the contrary; but having learned all about her home town by the precocious age of six, all Sadie had to do was to multiply it by the number of towns in the United States. You are sure to be asked such things as: Does His Majesty live in Westminster Abbey or the Houses of Parliament? Do you do the Charleston in London? Why does Sherlock Holmes always leave London from Baker Street Station? and, What is London Pride? "

In the meantime, visits from Tabby continued regularly, and Sam, although he showed but mild interest in the affairs of the League, was always glad to see his old friend.

Referring to the subject, one day after a long silence on the matter, Sam said to him, " Under normal circumstances and with tractable material, reform in the Independent League might have made more inspiring headway, but as things are enlightenment must come from abroad." " How do you know that? " enquired Tabby. " Because it is through me it will come about," said Sam. He was unwilling to go further into it: " It is unlucky to do so," he considered.

Not long after this statement to Tabby, Sam was inspired to write to Mamie. Nancy prepared the gramophone with a recording needle and Sam spoke:

Dear Mamie:

The civilities of my letter to you will be better conveyed in Nancy's to her friend, Sadie. It is through you I wish to address the members of the American Legion of Independence, in this.

Members of the Legion of Independence of America: I have been an advocate of progressive reform to the Cats of the League of Independence in England. To them it is not apparent that their instinct is being rapidly superseded by the mechanical, because they are essentially conservative, and as such are unable to adapt themselves to a mechanical world of progression.

It will be more appreciable, I hope, to you in America who started life as machines. In consequence, as far as I can see, the salvation and ultimate emancipation of our race lies in your hands.

It is quite possible — nay more, even probable — that you, living in close contact with this abundant advantage, may be less aware of freedom than we who need it.

It is my hope that I may be the means of promulgating among your more enlightened ranks in America a vast and thoroughly practical scheme of reform; which, though you may do without it yourselves, may be exported as an incentive to your backward brothers here."

After this Sam returned to his address to Mamie.

" If you, dear Mamie, are moved as I anticipate you will be by this appeal on behalf of your backward brothers in England, you will, perhaps, convey my message to the American Legion and let me have an account of their attitude."

Nancy wrote to her school friend:

Woolwich,
April, 1927.

Dearest Sadie:

You will be pleased to hear that we are coming to New York. We are all very excited about it; especially

Sam. He is our Siamese cat. I don't think I have told you about him. We got him from a Siamese boat that Daddy piloted into London. He walked into my basket while we were going through the Customs. He quite fills the place of Bobby in Mrs. Smart's heart. But he is more than that to me. He is a lovely creature and intelligent too; I am sure you will like him. I am sure he understood when I told him about America: he had such a lot to say that I just made the gramophone record of it, which I am sending to you for you to play over to your Mamie. I do so hope they will be friends, and am longing to hear from you what impression Sam's voice makes upon Mamie.

We don't quite know when we are to start, but it will be soon. I wish I could remember what you said about the climate in New York. I am so busy getting ready, and don't know whether to pack woollens — you must write and tell me what is necessary. I hardly think that *they* would be if you all sleep on the roofs.

Another thing will interest you too, that is Dad's boat, or rather, the one he is navigating over. It is something quite new. I remember how proud you were of the *Acquafortis* when you made your last trip on her. You won't want to sail in *that* boat again when you have seen Daddy's. But there — I mustn't give away any secrets. It is to be a complete surprise for the newspapers when we arrive. There is just one thing about it that will appeal to you — it has lovely

fives courts, especially constructed for the passengers! Now I must stop for I still have lots to do. Don't keep me waiting for a reply and send me a list of things that are cheaper in New York.

With love from
Yours,
NANCY.

P.S.
Sam makes his mark to Mamie.

Mr. Swift took Nancy on the final inspection of the *Turveytania,* and she carried Sam in what she called his ' travelling case,' — the basket in which he evaded the Customs' inspection on the S. S. *Seem.*

The *Turveytania* lay at anchor in the mouth of the Thames, its masts did not permit it to enter shallow water. Later on, it was anticipated by the promoter, new docks would be constructed all over the world; and incidentally, be of great aid in reducing the unemployment problem. But until then, she had to anchor out in deep water.

Mr. Swift arrived with Nancy at Gravesend and was met by the inventor and his promoter, who were waiting at the wharfside in the *Turveytania's* motor dinghy. The promoter, dressed in a frock

coat and top hat, announced that he had had news of a sudden visit from the government. He said the Prime Minister — with experts from the admiralty, a representative of a transatlantic line, and a member of the stock exchange — was expected that afternoon to consider the possibilities of the invention.

" It appears," said Mr. Nonstop the promoter, looking at a letter marked O.H.M.S., " The prime minister's attention was drawn to the invention by a copy of my letter addressed to the Board of Mercantile Marine six years ago. It was taken in a raid on an alien socialist headquarters, and read in the House of Lords in connection with the question of their deportation which was brought up before the government.

" In a 'phone conversation with him this morning, I told the Prime Minister of our departure tomorrow for New York; and he replied that the inventor's claims of steadiness for the boat in rough seas might be used, in addition to a reduction in the fare, as an inducement to emigration in Canada. But he said there was no great hurry and the matter could stand over until our return. I told him we were not coming back and received a message from him later announcing his intended visit this afternoon. He apologized profusely for the inconvenience and said, as certain interested people were

pressing him, he had hurriedly got together a committee of investigation."

When Nancy, in her younger days had been to see the prime minister in a street procession, a trooper of the Horse Guards passed by in the escort and she mistook him for the prominent man; for she did not expect to discover him riding in a carriage, the gentleman in a frock coat and top hat who passed a few minutes later. The gorgeous uniform and shining steel cuirass of the horseguardsman had quite fulfilled her expectations; and stepping down from her stand she was unable to regain it in the crush to see him when the acclamation of the crowd showed her mistake.

When Mr. Nonstop told her father of the Prime Minister's visit, she was so excited about the importance of the occasion she forgot all about Sam in her basket. Sam remained there until after tea, and, in consequence, his impressions were conjectured as Nancy carried him around.

Sam found it very difficult to maintain what was known as *impartial* or *sound* judgment from the inside of a basket. Without philosophy it was almost impossible to support such a handicap.

The absence of appearance and mien left nothing to contradict the partiality of the speakers' voices. "We become so accustomed to restricted

vision," thought Sam, " that Modern French Masters of a Painting confine themselves in a basket of reasoning about the eye, Modern Musicians barricade themselves with the ear, and so on, and on, on the pattern of our great departmental stores in our great departmental age. Surely someone somewhere was rebel enough to see co-ordination at headquarters as superior to partial vision."

Mr. Newbirth, the inventor, stood by while Mr. Nonstop did the talking. Mr. Newbirth was a young man of a sallow complexion, with a distant look in the eye, a tight skin, a full sensitive mouth, and carelessly dressed in a lounge suit. He greeted Mr. Swift on his arrival and promptly retired to sit in the stern seat of the dinghy, in which Mr. Nonstop stood up talking to Nancy and her father upon the quayside.

Mr. Nonstop at once said, looking down the quay towards a party of men approaching, " Here is the Prime Minister and his party." He seemed a little embarrassed, not knowing whether to raise his hat or use his handkerchief. Mr. Swift took the initiative and turned to face them.

Foremost came the Prime Minister, Mr. Conjectit; with him: Mr. Foresight, a representative of the Transatlantic Shipping Line; Mr. Sheeney Shiney, a member of the Stock Exchange; Mr.

Mollusc, O.B.E., the managing director of the Board of Mercantile Marine; and two experts from the Admiralty.

The good humored party made Mr. Nonstop's embarrassment seem a little out of place. Looking at his watch, Mr. Sheeney Shiney said, " Ha, we're just on time." The Prime Minister, turning to Mr. Swift, asked if he were Mr. Newbirth, the inventor of the *Turveytania*.

Mr. Nonstop completely obscured the inventor from the Prime Minister's view and said, " Yes, your . . . Mr. Prime Minister, the *Turveytania* is in the estuary, and if you and your party will take places in the boat we can go over to it."

Mr. Swift helped them down into the dinghy. Mr. Newbirth rose as the Prime Minister was about to sit in his lap. " Oh — are you getting out — ? " said the Prime Minister.

Mr. Nonstop noticing the incident said to the Prime Minister, " Let me introduce Mr. Newbirth, the inventor of the *Turveytania*." Mr. Newbirth shook hands with the Prime Minister and sat down again. Mr. Swift, who had by now descended to the boat, saw them all seated in an order befitting their status.

Sam, from the inside of the basket, caught a fussiness in the atmosphere which repressed in him a demand to be let out. From therein, he heard:

PRIME MINISTER

Is this the *Turveytania* we are approaching?

MR. NONSTOP

Yes.

Grappling sounds on side of Turveytania by boat-hook.

P. M.

But it is upside down!

MR. NEWBIRTH

Yes, — the right way up.

MR. NONSTOP

Mr. Newbirth will explain.

MR. NEWBIRTH

I came upon the idea while contemplating the bat.

A NAVAL EXPERT

Ha ha! — yes, it is something like a cricket bat.

MR. NEWBIRTH

ignoring

The bat hangs in the branches of trees by day, and sees the world upside down. At dusk, when everybody retires to the horizontal position, he flits from his leafy home and sees the world the right way up! *nervously.* He persists with such assurance in his inverted life, that it struck me there might be something more than met the eye in his viewpoint; and in the *Turveytania* — which you see here — is the result of my labours on a boat which, until I contemplated the wisdom of the bat, I had tried for many years unsuccessfully to sail the right way up.

The bumping of the boat against the side of the Turveytania and the passengers being helped aboard. Sam's basket being seized, carried after them, and placed on deck.

P. M.

What means of propulsion is employed?

MR. NONSTOP

Sails.

MR. FORESIGHT

But aren't they rather out of date?

MR. NEWBIRTH

They have never been properly understood.

MR. MOLLUSC

What about the ship's lifeboats?

MR. NONSTOP

There are no lifeboats.

MR. MOLLUSC

No lifeboats! — the certificate of sailing cannot be issued . . .

MR. CONJECTIT

interrupting, sympathetically

You mean the lifeboats are not completed yet Mr. Nonstop. . . .

MR. MOLLUSC

But according to the regulations — every sea going passenger boat must be provided with — er — lifeboats.

MR. NONSTOP

politely interrupting

And the lifeboats — are they to be provided with .....

MR. MOLLUSC

LIFEBELTS!

MR. NEWBIRTH

The *Turveytania* is a lifeboat.

MR. SHEENEY SHINEY

Yes — I am afraid it wouldn't interest the insurance companies.

MR. NEWBIRTH

By releasing a spring in the captain's cabin, when necessary, the *Turveytania* divides its sides into twelve separate water-tight compartments; each complete with sails, hydrophones, reserve rations, etc.

The steward announcing tea served, and Mr. Swift, the captain, conducting the party to the dining room.

MR. CONJECTIT

What do you most like inventing, Mr. Newbirth?

MR. NEWBIRTH

Evasions.

MR. CONJECTIT

eagerly

I'd like to hear some of your inventions.

MR. NEWBIRTH

retiringly

I don't remember them.

MR. CONJECTIT

And what do you least like inventing, Mr. Newbirth?

MR. NEWBIRTH

Excuses.

2ND. NAVAL EXPERT

Why do you most like inventing evasions? and least like inventing excuses?

MR. NEWBIRTH

The first for my own preservation, and the last because there is so little room for originality.

MR. SHEENEY SHINEY

Oh ho, Conjectit, that's a good one — I must remember it.

MR. CONJECTIT

I don't think you understand, Sheeney Shiney.

Nancy thought of Sam after tea and released him. The committee were shown all over the *Turveytania*. The Prime Minister said he was sorry to see the invention go out of England, and Mr. Nonstop enquired of him if a law could not be passed, prohibiting people from sailing on any other type of boat. The Prime Minister replied with deliberation that we were a maritime nation, and, he feared, would not readily be persuaded to believe in a boat that did not look like one. To this, Mr. Sheeney Shiney suggested that a camouflage superstructure, in the form of an ordinary liner, might be erected on the inverted hull for the sake of appearances and insurance companies. The inventor objected that it would embarrass the efficiency of his invention.

At the end of the inspection the Prime Minister consented to be photographed at the *Turveytania's* helm, and said he would keep in touch with her by hydrophone. He bade the captain and crew Godspeed on the trip, and intimated that should

the boat meet with unprecedented success in America with regard to its appearance, the inventor might look forward hopefully to his return and a government commission to invent a better boat for the glory of his country. At these encouraging words, the crew gave a hearty cheer and the dinghy left with the Prime Minister and his party. Mr. Newbirth's temperament did not permit him to participate in the cheering with much enthusiasm.

The *Turveytania's* departure was unnoticed. A cab conveyed Mr. Swift, Nancy, and Mrs. Smart to the wharf, and their boxes were handled by the crew. The next day a few curious local residents concluded that the 'capsized' boat had sunk. Among the wharf loungers the fact that the mystery ship (which they knew nothing about) had gone, was mentioned once or twice.

A position on board as stewardess had been found for Mrs. Smart, who was unwilling to remain at the Villa without Bobby. She had a cabin next to Nancy's which was beautifully fitted out, and in the corner of which a place was found for Sam's basket.

On the first day of the voyage out Nancy became friendly with the engineer who admired Sam. He

said to her, after a game of fives during which Sam was seen strolling along the deck, " That's an intelligent cat, Miss Swift." " Yes," replied Nancy; " cats are intelligent." " So you include the whole race! " said the engineer. " Well, yes," replied Nancy, " — most people judge the world on much smaller representation . . . I suppose it's all right. . . . It becomes such a habit, you know." Looking at Sam she said, " Sam says we're going to have fine weather." " He does. How does he do that? " enquired the engineer. Nancy said cautiously, in some alarm at the engineer's tone, " Oh, his coat is so shiny — and that's always a good sign, you know."

The engineer stooped to stroke Sam and said to him, " I'm afraid we have no rats on board, puss." " Haven't you? " said Nancy, " I thought all ships had rats." " They do generally; but they don't like the look of this one," said the engineer. " Rats are said to leave a sinking ship — but they have never taken to the *Turveytania* since she was invented." " Her appearance must upset their calculations," said Nancy; " they are not very bright, poor dears. I am not very sure of my catechism, Mr. Thorogood — is the *Turveytania* a steamer — or what? " " She's a currenter," replied the engineer.

" I don't think I remember just what that

means," said Nancy. "I'd be delighted to show you over her, if you'd care to go?" said the engineer. "I would," replied Nancy. The engineer led the way, explaining as he went that 'currenters' *will be* ships which will make use of under water currents. "I say *will be,*" he said, "because the *Turveytania* is really the first."

Nancy said it was very exciting to be on a boat the class of which was not really in existence. "Sounds rather queer," suggested the engineer. "Yes, it does when you think about it," said Nancy, "but you mustn't think about it." "I'll try not to," said the engineer, "— but I'd like to know why."

"Just imagine," said Nancy, "if monkeys had been told they were to become humans, they would never have known to this day when it happened — it would all have seemed so natural. But they knew nothing about it — until it was discovered — and so of course we know just exactly when it was." "I see now," said the engineer, who had begun to like Nancy.

There was very little machinery to show. It chiefly consisted of motor winches for setting and furling the sails under water.

At Southampton the *Turveytania* put in for mail and Nancy received a letter from her friend Sadie and a parcel containing a gramophone record from

Mamie. Sadie's letter was brief, it expressed her delight at the news and asked Nancy to stay with her in New York.

Nancy took Sam to her cabin and put the record on the phonolia for him. The letter from Mamie was not at all what Sam expected; but on thinking it over it seemed to offer new fields of encouragement, which meant working a little less directly and not perhaps so openly as Sam had anticipated. It sustained hope, which was the great thing.

Dear Sam:

The receipt of your letter was a happy event. They have been getting very hardboiled at the Legion of late. And they have needed something, but what I did not know until I received your proposition for reform on a grand scale, when I said: This is what the Legion wants to reduce the accumulated refinements of specialization, so as to fit it for decent people of more all round capacities.

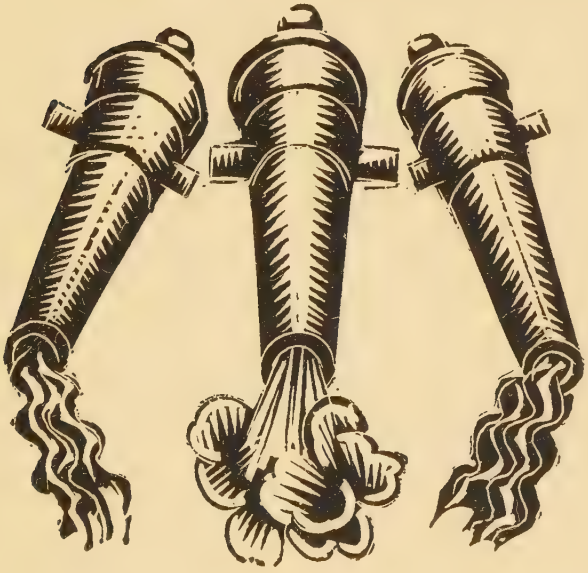
I hustled the proposition round to the Legion but they received it in quite an unexpected fashion. They weren't a bit thrilled about the idea of reform — said there was no profit in it for anyone. So to mend a bad start I repaired to ambush by saying, as I inferred it from your letter, that you hold free converse with humans and that it might be a profitable advantage they would be overlooking not to get the hang of it

from you. If you can make a feature of this *conversation line* you will be in a fair way to put over the reform stuff all right.

Anyway, I'll be mighty glad to make your acquaintance, and you can rely on me to do a little private propaganda among the big guns.

Your devoted disciple,

MAMIE.



CHAPTER NINE

AMERICA

The voyage across the Atlantic was ideal. The underwater sails acted as a gigantic keel and there was no movement whatsoever. When it was too rough to go on deck the passengers played billiards, or took exercise on a specially constructed inside deck. The hatches were battened down and the waves washing over the outside decks cleaned off the old chalk scores from the walls of the fives courts so that they were all nice and clean for the next day.

They had one stormy day during the crossing but the passengers knew nothing about it. At the

end of the inside deck a special fan was fixed by the inventor, which, by means of a small mechanism synchronized with the interval between the waves, took in charges of fresh air. Everything possible

was done to make the alternative as good or even better than a fine day in the open. The walls were painted with realistic scenes of calm seascapes in which the horizon was decoratively broken up with groups of picturesque fishing vessels. Artificial sunlight with a super quality of ultra violet rays lit the interior scenes. A large arc lamp rose in the prow and set in the stern of the ship. It travelled over the ceiling of the saloon to give a perfect illusion of the rising and setting sun; but without danger of sunstroke to those of most delicate skin.

Nancy visited the film room which, on the first trip, was used for charts to serve as a guide to the operator in making a special film for future navigation between the two ports. The centre mast was hollow, and provided with a small elevator communicating between the lookout room on deck and the film or chart room at the bottom — formerly the top, of the mast. Nancy descended with the engineer and found it to be a very comfortable little circular room, cheerfully decorated to make the operator's tedious watches agreeable. The walls were lined with art canvas on which in curved frames, were hung etchings of seacraft of the passing phase: the *Puritania,* the *Prunia,* and the *Prisimia* were depicted labouring heavily on the surface of troubled seas.

Nancy stood by and watched the operator. On a large circular platform of plate glass, inset in the floor of the compartment, stood two powerful arc lamps directed towards the ocean's bottom. A cinematograph camera with a telescopic lens was employed to photograph the course as they passed over it.

The engineer explained to her that the compass used by the navigator in the lookout on deck would not be necessary once a film had been taken: the ship would be more efficiently navigated by following the filmed course. " When made," he told her,

" it will be thrown upon a screen in front of the navigator, whose duty it will be to check it with a periscopic view of the bottom as the ship passes over it."

He then took her to an instrument erected on the plate glass platform behind the operator, and showed her a view of the ocean's bottom in its true colours on a frosted glass screen. " Oh! " exclaimed Nancy as she stared at the screen in amazement.

The curious pelagic creatures crawling about the bed of the sea, and the extraordinary plants waving gently in the slothful currents of the depths were new wonders to her. They could be seen for several hundreds of yards on either side of the course.

" What boat is that, Mr. Thorogood? " asked Nancy, when she saw a huge ship lying on its side and partly overgrown. The engineer took from a locker a pair of marine glasses and, uncovering his head, placed them on the screen for Nancy to look through. Focussing them, she read the name *Mightanic* on the upturned side of the ship.

" Get up," said Nancy's father, coming into Nancy's cabin, " we shall soon be entering New York harbour." Nancy arose, had breakfast, and

went on deck. The ship's bar was locked. The Statue of Liberty, holding aloft a torch to illuminate freedom and bravery, stood against a background of skyscrapers. Nancy thought it looked much smaller than when she saw it filling the foreground on a picture postcard. The colour of the

water reminded her of the Thames; as the tugs hurried about on it with what resembled pulls of white cotton wool glued to and streaming from their funnels. They dashed through waves flecked with the same material.

Nancy had a strange big small feeling, hard to explain. The scene looked toylike. Perhaps the repetition of details made it so, just as details do on painted doll's houses. She was thrilled with it

all until the Customs officers came and then, as the examination of papers dragged on in the saloon, everything grew large; the toy city took on enormous proportions.

Mr. Swift accompanied Nancy to Sadie's house. They landed at the Battery and took the East Side L to Thirty-eighth Street. From here they walked up Fifth Avenue. Nancy was pleased with the shops and twice she opened Sam's basket for him to peep at the sights — to see the lions outside the Public Library, and a team of fire engines by Central Park.

At Sixtieth Street they turned east to Second Avenue, and there asked the way. From a polite stranger who said he was going in their direction and offered to conduct them, Sam got his first impressions of New York — through the interstices of a formidable wicker basket.

STRANGER

Have you been long in New York, Captain?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

I arrived today.

STRANGER

Do you come from England?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

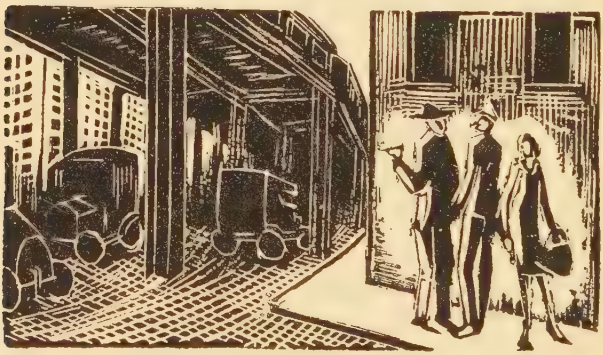
Yes.

STRANGER

What are your impressions of New York? I have often wondered what an Englishman would think of our city.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Well, . . . *train passes on the L* . . . er . . . I was struck by . . . *another train passes*



STRANGER

Yes?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

stopping

I am afraid I have forgotten my impressions.

STRANGER

stopping

That's too bad. Have you no elevated railway in London?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

No, but we have dogs.

STRANGER

I don't understand; but I would like to hear about your elevated dogs.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Pardon me, I didn't mean to say we have elevated dogs.

STRANGER

They must be pretty well trained to draw the . . .

CAPTAIN SWIFT

I was about to say . . .

STRANGER

Oh; go ahead.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

A friend of mine who had recently returned from America was asked by his old professor to give his im-

pressions. They went for a walk, and the professor was accompanied by a large dog whose interest in architectural details on the ground plane caused him to lag

behind. My friend was constantly interrupted by the professor calling in his dog and he lost his impressions of America.

STRANGER

Did the professor hear them on another occasion? I would like to know what they were.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

No, he did not — the professor's dog could never be left at home alone.

STRANGER

Doesn't your traffic make a noise in London?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Yes, but more quietly.

STRANGER

Must be a fine city!

CAPTAIN SWIFT

after a pause, apologetically

But I suppose London's noises must be very trying to people who think more quietly than the traffic runs.

In this way they chatted on for several blocks and Captain Swift was able to give quite a lot of his impressions of New York without thinking about it; yet, when they reached Eighty-fifth Street, the stranger, before taking his leave, regretted that Captain Swift had lost his impressions of New York and hoped he would be able to recover them.

Sadie gave a warm welcome to Nancy and her father, and shortly afterwards Captain Swift returned alone to the *Turveytania* to make arrangements for its exhibition. He invited the girls to tea on board the next day.

Nancy and Sadie had much to tell each other while Sam and Mamie meow-ed a good deal. Nancy feared to make herself appear ridiculous

to her friend in an unsuccessful attempt to maintain that she understood what the pets were saying, so said nothing about it. Sadie said that their talk was as bizarre and amusing as the exhibition of negro sculptures at Messrs. Artsteins on Fifth Avenue. She said it was a crazy joke for her to make a record of Mamie's speech: (speaking in unconscious imitation of the officers who plundered the negro curiosities from the Gold Coast on the first expedition there).

Nancy was taken to see the rest of New York on the following morning, and in the afternoon Sadie visited the *Turveytania* with her.

Mr. Thorogood showed them over the ship. They saw the bottom of the Hudson in the film room, had tea in Captain Swift's cabin, and, of course, Sadie paid a visit to Mrs. Smart, who remained on board for the exhibition.

When Nancy and Sadie returned they discovered that the two cats had gone out. As Nancy was going to bed Sam came into her room and said he had had a hectic time at a meeting of the Legion, where he had put forward a proposal for the partial substitution of cats' instinct by mechanical judgment. He said he had urged that the combination of instinct and mechanical reason would ultimately survive: he had begged his race to adopt the mechanical aids to existence so as to leave their

instinct free to determine the future of the race's development.

Instinct, he said, would be surer than reason in the detection of the destructive element in the conflict between machinery and mankind.

After the meeting he was surrounded by the Republican leaders of the Legion, who threatened him with *ghastly reprisals* if he should not give up his attempt to introduce a reform which they considered unprofitable to the community. At the same time they showed great interest in his supposed ability to converse with humans, which they said would be of service to them.

Sam went to sleep at the foot of Nancy's bed. When she awoke in the morning he told her of his strange dream:

" Overnight it was discovered and proclaimed the next morning that man had descended from the apes. The result might have been anticipated: perhaps it was. Two camps were here: one quickly formed and canvassed recruits, the other had always been with its establishment complete. Ultimatums were issued and battle followed in the common field of dispute — the No Man's Land of belief.

" Barricades were thrown up: on the one side, of historical legends, biographies, epistles, monuments, candlesticks, crucifixes, and fonts; on the

other, piles of scientific apparatus, the microscope, geological specimens and treatises.

" Each side put its hardware on the parapet, as more formidable protection against the other's enfilades. Each army did its utmost to revise the curriculum of training for recruits. Each commander issued strict orders against fraternization with the enemy in No Man's Land.

" After twenty years of warfare the commanders looked out upon the wastage of material that lay perished beyond their defences.

" While the lines of defences moved backwards and forwards considerably, the intervening No Man's Land remained and snipers of great courage voluntarily left the defences and in danger of being shot in the back by their own, fraternized in the

shell holes. And returned to tell their companions that enemy snipers were just like themselves; the rank and file they said were not a bad lot: subject to the same needs, governed by the same fears and compelled by the same beliefs — in commands which they could no better understand.

" One day in No Man's Land, two snipers met face to face. One carried a quick firing bible and the other an ultra penetrating microscope. Simultaneously each one was shot by his own in the back with a ball. As they lay side by side wounded and waiting for relief, they turned to each other and smiled.

" ' I'm sorry if I shot you,' said one to the other. ' You didn't,'the other replied; ' I was shot in the back.' ' So was I,' added the first. They bandaged one another.

" Each agreed, for they were both brave men and good soldiers, that they had had a good time in the campaign and could not complain. Then they fell to explaining the pleasures of soldiering and discovered they both liked the same things: the amenities of campaign life and the enjoyment of simple necessities — which was only possible in absolute immunity from responsibility, and the making of decisions.

" ' Then why can't we enjoy these things without killing one another? ' asked one; and the other re-

plied, ' Because we have not learnt to do without responsibility. We push it on to another.' ' We have learned it now,' replied the first. ' Yes,' said the other, with a gasp, ' but I don't think I shall live to enjoy it.' ' How do you feel? ' asked the first; and the other made no reply.

He was dead."

Another day, when Nancy had been reading a book on psychology, she said to Sam, " That was a very strange dream." " Yes, an interpretation of the great war," said Sam. " Oh, no," said Nancy; " the great war was fought for the honour and protection of small nations. I read it somewhere. When Belgium had been invaded and Holland was threatened with the same fate, the justice and indignation of the Allied Powers were outraged and they threw themselves into the conflict to suppress the ambitious inhumanity of aggressors.

" Your dream has a psychological meaning: The war is one between the evolutionists and the creationists; in which you appear as one of the snipers who found common understanding."

" But one of them died," said Sam. " He was not you," replied Nancy. " That is worse," rejoined Sam, " for if he is my only means of realizing and

is cut off by death, how can I be sure Life is no more than a dream — even if it should happen to me? "

" It is said that the greatest philosophers just lived and it was their followers, but imperfectly understanding them, who wrote their philosophies," said Nancy. " But *that* cannot be proved," said Sam. " Is it proof that you want? " asked Nancy.

" A reformer is essentially a domestic animal, in putting his house in order he anticipates the pleasure the reaction will have upon himself: It is faith I want," Sam replied. " Faith in what? " asked Nancy. " Faith in myself," replied Sam. " But you have that, Sam; I am sure you have," said Nancy.

" One can never be certain of it," said Sam, " without seeing it in another." " I don't understand you," said Nancy.

" The story you told me of Narcissus," Sam said, meditatively, " I interpret to mean: because Narcissus saw himself reflected in *water* he believed his image to be that of another; but had he seen himself reflected in the face of Echo he would have known it to be that of himself, and the tragedy would have been averted."

" However that may have been," said Nancy, " you remind me that I must become a ' domestic animal,' and help Sadie to put this house in order.

Daddy is bringing Mr. Newbirth and Mr. Nonstop to lunch today."

at lunch

NANCY

Where is Mr. Newbirth?

MR. NONSTOP

Ha, that is just what *I* would like to know.

NANCY

Didn't you ask him, father?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Yes, I asked him — it was on the morning of the visit from the American shipping experts, and he said he would like to come.

NANCY

Do tell us what the *experts* said.

MR. NONSTOP

They were extremely interested — extremely interested — expressed the highest appreciation. They were delighted with everything; weren't they, Swift?

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Yes, indeed. They were convinced of the *Turveytania's* success as a popular form of passenger boat.

NANCY

And the trial run?

MR. NONSTOP

On the morning of the experts' inspection, a boat belonging to the ship's provisioner lay alongside. When Mr. Newbirth heard their appreciation he disappeared, and afterwards it was discovered that he left in that boat. He was not seen again until today.

NANCY

And didn't he leave word?

MR. NONSTOP

He left a note with the steward in which he said: (*producing it and reading*) 'Well done, old Nonstop! it's through. We are both millionaires. My heartiest congratulations; but — really, you must excuse me — I cannot stay to be decorated. I never could abide a fuss. NEWBIRTH.' (*perceiving a smile*) Don't laugh please. The trial run had to take place without the inventor!

SADIE

Nothing went wrong I hope, Mr. Nonstop?

MR. NONSTOP

No; but when we got under way the committee of experts objected that the *Turveytania* was silent. They said that the American public could not be expected to believe in a machine that made no noise.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

It was then that Mr. Newbirth's absence was discovered. It was thought that he had fallen overboard — until the steward came forward with his note.

MR. NONSTOP

Yes. The experts wanted to see that note, but I couldn't show it to them. I made an excuse for him

in the sudden illness of his sister. He told the steward that as he was now a rich man, he was going off to buy some new suits.

NANCY

An Englishman buy clothes in America at New York prices!

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Nancy, you must not forget, my dear, that Mr. Newbirth is an inventor.

MR. NONSTOP

But his presence was necessary at the trial run!

NANCY

to Mr. Nonstop

You said Mr. Newbirth returned; so I suppose he will be able to make the necessary modifications on the *Turveytania,* Mr. Nonstop?

MR. NONSTOP

When he returned, I told him, in a most considerate manner, what the experts had to say about the noise: I called it *eyewash* to please him.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

Yes; what then?

MR. NONSTOP

despairingly

He threw his arms into the air and raved fanatically: — 'SILENCE, is the chief feature of my design. The human race require more of it — more tranquillity — and if you others don't want it I'll go and find it for myself.' And he left in a rage.

CAPTAIN SWIFT

It was intemperate of him of course, but I can see his point.

MR. NONSTOP

thundering

These gentlemen are experts in public opinion; they know what the public wants; that is their job! (*calmly*) And they recommended Mr. Newbirth to study the auditory principles of the turnstile on the elevated railway.

On another occasion some days later, Captain Swift told Nancy that Mr. Newbirth had disappeared again and had not been heard of since; and that he, her father, was thinking of returning to England. Mr. Nonstop, he said, was going to exhibit the *Turveytania* to sightseers at a dollar a time, to recover some of his expenses. And that

Mrs. Smart had received a letter from the housekeeper at the Hollies, saying that Bobbie had returned and was breaking his heart about her. Captain Swift proposed to take Mrs. Smart back to England with him.

Nancy elected to remain with Sadie in New York, to see a little more of America; so her father would go home alone and try to reopen the question of the *Turveytania* with the British Government: propose a subsidy to uncertainty.

Captain Swift had been gradually swinging round to the inventor's point of view. He had never discussed it directly with him, but he began to see that inventions, that mankind would be much better off without, should not be foisted upon the public by experts who had an impetus on some popular conception like noise. *Every invention should confer advantages with no disadvantages before it became a public acquisition. Private inventions were private affairs; they were different.*

A letter from Mrs. Smart to Nancy told her all about Bobbie's re-installation at the Villa. He was a little thinner, but she was fattening him up again. It was like the old days again to see Bobbie at breakfast, and on the piece of sunlit linoleum

in the Captain's room during the afternoon. Also, the mice that had flourished so during Sam's reign, showed signs of diminution.

Nancy waited for Sam's return to give him the news.

At ten o'clock Mamie came in alone. Sam did not appear that night.

After many days, Nancy became concerned about Sam. And upon Sadie's advice, she inserted an advertisement in the Dumb Friends Weekly.

LOST

Left home Friday evening. Not been seen since. Siamese cat answering to name of Sam. Please communicate the anxious owner. Box 1927. Dumb Friends Weekly.

Nancy had two letters forwarded by the Dumb Friends Weekly, and opened them with impatience. One was from a lonely bachelor who signed himself her true Valentine. He expressed deep regret with the owner of Sam in her loss, and tentatively suggested — in the event of the worst happening — that if she should feel lonely he would like to offer himself to fill the vacancy. He advertised himself as being most up to date in his opinions and prepared to undergo the test of trial on approval.

The other letter was a stenciled duplicate signed

with a rubber stamp, from a goldfish and bird dealer.

Dear Madam:

Permit us to express our sorrow at your loss. The absence of a cherished one leaves the bereaved so desolate as sometimes to imagine that his (or her) place in the sufferer's affection may never be adequately filled by another. But we are happy to be able to assure you that this is not the case. We have a large selection of affectionate monkeys, parrots, dogs, cats, tortoises, goldfish, lizards, etc., and will welcome your inspection with the greatest consideration and service.

Yours faithfully,

Messrs. YOUMAY AMOUR.

Japan London New York

After ten days, Nancy one evening opened the door to the coloured janitor who came up with the mail. The narrow door of Sadie's flat — at the summit of twenty flights of stairs — opening upon a small landing with a lift well to one side and a view of New York's roofs through the window opposite, made Nancy feel like old Noah looking out from the Ark. The dusky dove handed her a letter, forwarded by the Dumb Friends Weekly. Nancy sat down to read it while Sadie was making the waffles. It was written in a nervous hand.

Dear Madam:

I read your announcement in the Dumb Friends Weekly and have since been hesitating to communicate with you. I saw a Siamese cat under unfortunate circumstances, and as the breed is not common thought it might be your Sam. You may, however, have received by this time happier tidings of him than those I can bring. The uncertainty of identification, and my fear that a mistake should cause you undue alarm, are the reasons for my delay in writing to you.

I am,

Yours obediently,

SAMUEL MONROI.

" Samuel," murmured Nancy, at the end of the letter — " what a coincidence! " She showed the letter to Sadie who said, " I should see him, my dear; he is charming, I'm sure."

" Mr. Samuel Monroi has called to see you; I have asked him into the drawing room. He is very nice," said Sadie to her friend. " Come in with me," said Nancy.

Mr. Monroi told Nancy he was a poet. On hearing that Sam had not returned he expressed delicately his worst fears: " One early morning on

the east side by the river — the river was the subject of a poem on which I had been engaged at the time; it so resembled my aimless existence — I came across a vacant house plot against the embankment and entered it through an aperture in the wooden hoarding, to lean over a wall bounding the river and contemplate its watery mystery.

" On turning away from the river, I saw a cat hanging from a piece of wire on a post. It appeared to have been strangled in an unusual manner. Its face wore a look of peaceful resignation, and the scene was so affecting I wrote an ode upon it.

" While thus engaged with my notebook in hand, the local milkman, on his morning rounds, came in and said it was a valuable animal. A passing policeman came too, and enquired suspiciously

what the matter was. The milkman repeated, ' A valuable animal '; and Murphy, the policeman, replied, ' Yes, the work of some God damn cuckoo foreigner.' "

Nancy said she would like to see the poem Mr. Monroi had written.

He produced a typewritten copy from his pocket and gave it to her.

Oh poor cat what is yours now
That the cord suspending you
Cut your life? — The treachery
Of Fate in the flower of hope? —
The mercy of oblivion
For a disillusioned soul?

No one will know.
No one can tell.

The silent hangman's knell
On a vacant wasted lot,
The flooding joys in life's
Well near brimming over —
Ushered out; and now
Bereavement fills another.

Mr. Monroi came again several times at Nancy's invitation, and they became friends.

One day she expressed a wish to go with him to

see the Vacant Lot, and he arranged to take her in the afternoon.

" Is it a pretty place? " Nancy enquired as they set out. " It has a melancholy charm in the evening," said Mr. Monroi. " Oh, what a pity if we shouldn't see it at its best," said Nancy. Mr. Monroi suggested that they could spend an hour at the Zoo — if Nancy had nothing better to do — and then the light would be just right at the vacant lot. The idea pleased Nancy, and they turned towards the Zoo.

Nancy thought she had never enjoyed anything so much. Mr. Monroi knew the animals. " When I stand before an animal I always have the feeling that I am the confined one, and that my animal friend is the spectator," said he. Nancy replied, " You enjoy the liberty of free thought because you are free. *You* may visualize confinement, and momentarily suffer its wrongs, during your dreams: but you wake again to liberty. I don't think we humans ever quite forget that. This beautiful tiger is quite unable to imagine that we are free. As he looks at us through his bars he imagines we are in the next cage. The only injustice in it for him is that our cage appears so much larger than his."

Mr. Monroi held out his hand and Nancy took it. " Perfect, my friend," was all he said.

They had tea in the gardens before leaving the Zoo. As they came away they passed the totem pole of the Great Bear Tribe of Alaskan Indians. Mr. Monroi stopped before it and looked up at the flying bird on its summit. After a pause of a moment, he said, " Apropos what you said in front of the tiger, I repeat here. We live in the confinement of great cities. Flight was once a reality to our forbears who conceived the Winged Victory, and to their relations who cut the bird on this monument. The Winged Victory is still the popular subject for the sculptors who make our war memorials: but there is more real essence of

F L I G H T

in that simple wooden eagle up there than in all the memorials to the Great War in the civilized world."

The lights on the far side of the river were struggling with daylight for supremacy when Nancy and Mr. Monroi reached the Vacant Lot. He took her to the river wall and turned about. " It was here," he said, uncovering his head.

Nancy looked at the Vacant Lot, but the feeling that she had lost a friend was absent. The man beside her seemed so much like Sam that she decided she could tell him that she and Sam had

learnt each other's language — he was so sympathetic he would understand.

They leaned over the river wall and gazed for a moment into the waters. " There are no insects here," said Nancy. " No, they do not thrive on smoke," he replied. " I miss them so much in this

light," said Nancy. " Have you written any lines on the bee? There is a deceptive buzzing of the distant traffic; but it is not quite convincing."

Mr. Monroi took out his pocket book and looking through it said, " There is just a lullaby." " Please let me see it," Nancy demanded. " Here it is, if you can see to read it," he said, offering her the book.

As she took it he retained her hand.

Boozle-boozle —
Busy bumble
Daddy's hunting,
Baby bumble bee.

Little white grub
Bend your nose
In quiet repose
Upon your nurse's knee.

The river lights were now brightest and it was evening.

OF THIS BOOK, DESIGNED
AND ENGRAVED BY THE
AUTHOR, 2500 COPIES
WERE PRINTED

A THOUGHT AND AN ACTION OR A

THE SIAMESE CAT

is written on the assumption that reason is more fallible than instinct and in acquiring reason we have lost much that is valuable in instinct. The cat's vicissitudes are identical with those that the unsophisticated should expect but, of course, do not.

The Siamese Cat is not necessarily a typical example of the idealist. He is, in fact, highly individual. He beholds the world not as we see it, but sometimes reversed and at all times catlike and Siamese.

It is, perhaps, because his biographer is a painter, sculptor, and engraver that the story is in reality a fairy tale in which the daily hopes and fears incident in the life of an idealist supplant the magic wands, invisible cloaks, and dragons of legend.

Children anywhere from 7 to 77 who have read and enjoyed their "Alice In Wonderland" will find much to delight them in the adventures of The Siamese Cat.